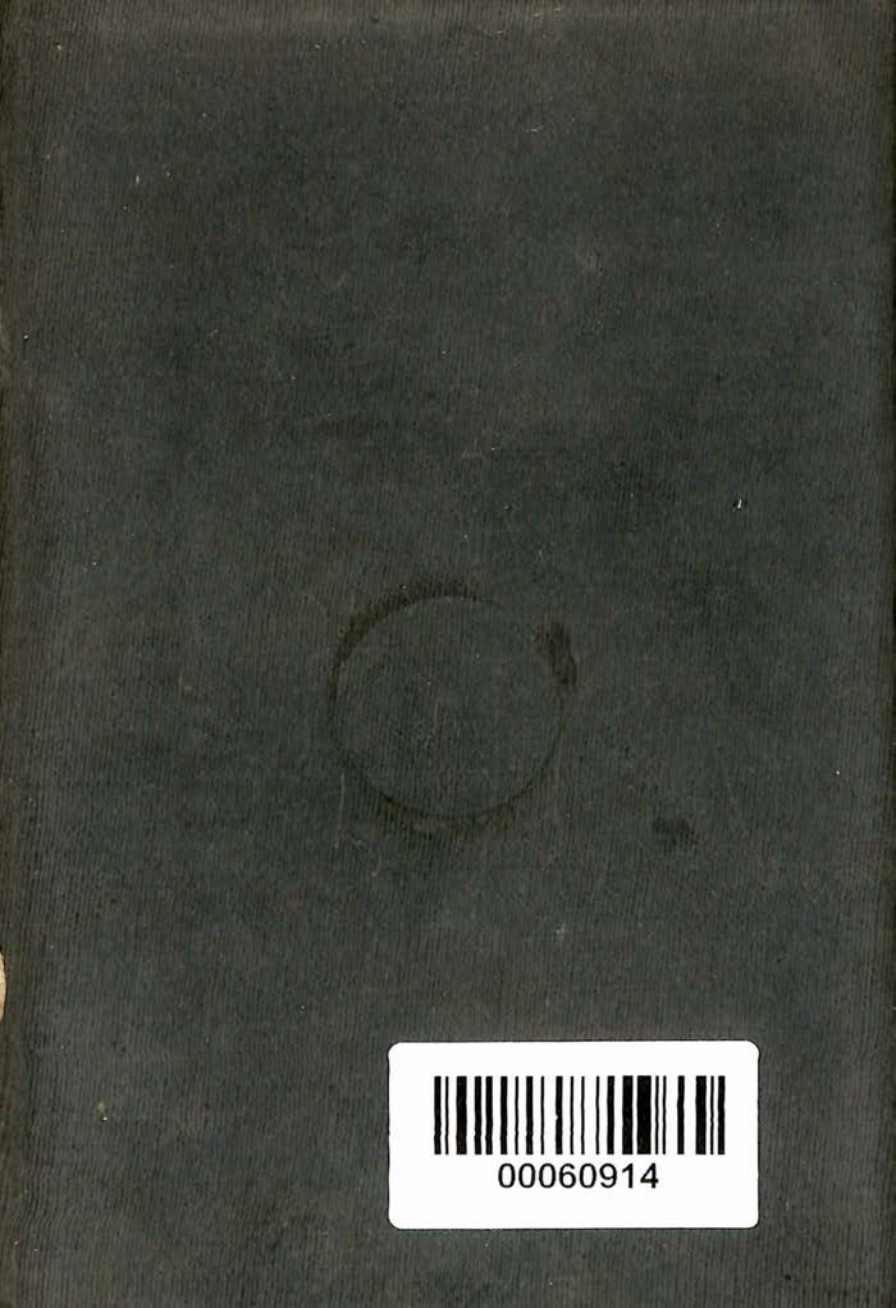
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UNDER THE PALMS

IN

ALGERIA AND TUNIS.

VOL. I.

TUNIS.

UNDER THE PALMS

IN

ALGERIA AND TUNIS.

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CONSTANTINE.

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BY

THE HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
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TO

My Mother

I DEDICATE

THIS MY FIRST BOOK.

PREFACE.

I AM quite aware of the responsibilities which I drew down upon myself when I first planned my present undertaking. "Write a book! Good gracious! think of the critics, consider the consequences!" said my friends. I did think of the critics—I did consider the consequences—and finally came to the conclusion that a plain story, plainly told, would not entail upon me a greater amount of condemnation than I was capable of enduring calmly.

Algeria is a country virtually unknown to Englishmen; a land at present a blank to British commercial enterprise, as yet undelved by the indefatigable Mr. Murray; and I conceived that a simple narrative, well supported by statistics, well stocked with reliable information, would not

be uninteresting matter for general perusal. It is true that a certain class of travellers take ship annually for Africa, to escape our inhospitable cold, and spend a certain number of months in the vicinity of Algiers, basking in its warmth, and probing its environs; but these wanderers return with spring to our northern clime, knowing as much about Algeria, its prospects and its future, as though they had never left their own firesides.

To know a people we must live among them, study their manners, and listen to their grievances; and in the case of a budding colony, such as the one at present under notice, we must sift their complaints, and compare their experiences with the reports of colonial administration. I travelled through Algeria in the company of two friends, untied by time, unshackled by extraneous circumstances; and when we had concluded our wanderings, we congratulated each other mutually upon not having missed a district in any of the three provinces, of each of which we had one sample, or more, stored up in our respective journal-books.

I have coupled Algeria and Tunis by way of

showing the differences and demonstrating the similarities of two sister countries situated side by side, enjoying the same advantages, and suffering under the same defects; the one rising gradually but surely from the mire of barbarism, under the influence of Christian and European help; the other, solitary, and still Mussulman, tottering rapidly to its fall. I have done little in the way of actual comparison, because I think that if I have at all succeeded in striking off the two photographs which are indelibly fixed upon the retina of my mind, the companion pictures will speak sufficiently strongly for themselves. If I have failed in my endeavour, I must humbly beg for the indulgence of the public, hoping, at the same time, that the subject will be taken up by some one more capable of doing it the justice which it undoubtedly deserves.

LEWIS WINGFIELD.

GARRICK CLUB.

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PART I.

Arab and Kabyle.

CHAPTER I.

ALGIERS.

ON the morning of the 24th of December, 1866, I leaned over the side of the good ship *Aréthuse*, of the Messageries Imperiales, to look upon Africa for the first time.

A dazzling blue sky without a cloud, that reflected greenly in the glassiest of seas; porpoises leaping gaily from the water, and plunging back out of the sunlight into the cold dark depths below; a distant line of jagged hills looming through a mist of heat; such is my first impression of the great Continent that lies across the Mediterranean.

As we neared the coast the town of Algiers rose gradually in sight, a great mass of piled-up white buildings, whose sharp corners reminded

me irresistibly of a *quarry*. Nearer and nearer yet—and now I could distinguish the long-arched quays, built by Sir Morton Peto, and the tall, new, gay houses of the French Colonists. The line of demarcation between the old and new towns is easily to be traced. The modern houses, and European shops and squares, are grouped along the water's edge; whilst the Moorish dwellings, whose small proportions and flat white roofs look singularly close and cramped, are heaped promiscuously one on the top of the other, sloping to the summit of the hill. To the right of the city lie the suburbs of "Mustapha," a pleasing mass of snow-white villas, peeping from groves and umbrageous woods, which completely cover the surrounding hills. Beyond these again, spreading along the bay, the lofty range of the Djerjura mountains, conspicuous with Tamgout and his eternal snows—a hazy line of irregular blue, fit finish to the landscape.

We steamed slowly into the fine harbour, and all peace was at an end. The steamer was immediately surrounded by myriads of little boats,

whose occupants vainly endeavoured to outshriek each other, and with loud cries and gesticulations to catch the attention of the passengers. This was all very well so far, but when the word was given there was a general rush, and the vessel was taken by storm. I stood manfully over my luggage, and succeeded for some time in successfully defending it against the invading crowd, with the help of my own true umbrella; but the bravest and the stoutest are vanquished sometimes, and I was at last compelled to lower my point, and submit to be taken prisoner by a great tall Arab, with no garments to speak of. My conqueror deposited me, with gestures of triumph, in his boat, and I now had time to watch the packing of the other victims, companions in misfortune. It was a novel and amusing scene for me, unaccustomed to oriental life; a total change in manners, customs, and in dress, in the space of two short days' journey from Marseilles.

I was soon landed on *terra firma*, and handed over by my lenient Arab to the tender mercies of the Hôtel d'Orient, a fine new building on the

quays, commanding a magnificent view of bay and sea and sky. Quite overcome by the heat, I sat at my open window, and watched the busy crowd beneath—some lounging and smoking in the street, some leaning lazily over the parapet to watch the arrival and departure of the steamers. Natives of every nation under heaven were jostling each other in that open space: Jews from Tunis, in gaily-embroidered jackets, and large full trowsers reaching to the knee—fine old men some of them, whose long white beards harmonized well with the voluminous folds of their gold and white turbans; Bedouins from the desert, clothed in soft woollen draperies that touched their heels—their heads wrapped in silken haiks, tied round with cords of camel's hair; lazzaroni from Naples, and sailors from Cadiz; Turks from Constantinople, and Negroes from Timbuctoo.

Here and there a lady in her yashmak, going to the bath, followed by an attendant negress, in the blue and white check which is peculiar to them. These white yashmaks and wide white trowsers that the oriental ladies wear, are only put on for

walking in the street; they conceal gorgeous vestments and jewelled chains, which sometimes peep out when the upper garment flutters in the wind. They cannot be comfortable, and certainly are not becoming, hiding as they do the entire figure, and transforming the most graceful woman into a mere bundle of clothes; whilst the jealous yashmak conceals the face, except the eyes, from view, making the latter, in many cases, all the more piercing, by contrast with the long white handkerchief.

These Moorish women lead a sad life; born of poor or rich parents, they are treated alike with indifference and contempt, being looked upon only as chattels or playthings. The Arabs say of a boy, "It is a benediction;" of a girl, "It is a malediction." The Moors, who after all are only Arabs, dwellers of the towns, hold the same opinion. Thus the girl grows up kicked and cuffed and beaten if she belongs to the poorer classes; left in a corner, abandoned to her negress attendant, if she comes of a noble house. Poor, her only desire will be to escape from the drudgery of home to the comparative ease of the streets; rich, she

will eat and grow up and marry, with no thought but of the wildest coquetry, no ambition but for intrigue. Arab women are by no means stupid, as is proved by the success of an embroidery school established by a French lady exclusively for Arab girls. They are perfectly capable of receiving instruction and education, but once returned to the bosom of their families, their improved condition only becomes an additional weight of misery to them; for, according to Mussulman prejudice, a woman is a *thing*, and nothing but a *thing*, whatever may be her education or the powers of her intellect.

The transition portion of the town between the European and Arab quarters is occupied by arcades well supplied with shops; cottons from England, and embroidery from Constantine. From this point you plunge into a bewildering maze of little streets, in which three persons could not possibly walk abreast. They are so steep as to necessitate the use of steps, and are paved with small smooth stones, that render it a work of difficulty for the stranger to keep his feet at all.

The first and second stories of the houses overhang the road on rafters, and in many cases almost touch each other at the top, which makes them dark and gloomy, though refreshingly cool, after the glare and heat below. Their small windows are jealously grilled, and their doors massively bolted and studded with iron; this gives the appearance in some sort of a prison—an aspect rendered not a whit more cheerful by sudden apparitions out of the darkness of shrouded forms, all white drapery and eyes, which are supposed in this country to hold the sacred place of woman. It is an arduous task to attempt to find one's way in such a labyrinth as this, for the most promising openings end very often in a dead wall, whilst the real way leads through dark holes and cut-throat passages.

The door of one of the dwellings is wide open, so we will walk in and observe the economy of a Moorish household. A square courtyard open to the sky, the floor and walls set with coarse blue and yellow tiles, and arcades of arches, resting on graceful marble pillars, that rise in tiers

one above the other. In the centre stands a softly-plashing fountain or great banana-tree, with cool green leaves and pleasant shadow. A straw mat or curtain slung across the rails of the topmost gallery shuts out the burning sun, and helps to soothe the slumbers of him who smokes and sleeps below. He watches lazily the circles rising from his perfumed narghili, meditating perhaps the while on the children that play and scratch and cry around, or listens to the ringing laughter of his busy wives above.

Arrived at the top of the hill, we emerge from the intricacy of buildings upon the ruins of the ancient city walls, and, further on, perceive the citadel of the last Dey, with its clumsy bastions and celebrated pavilion. This pavilion witnessed the scene which was the primary cause of the occupation of Algeria by the French. The Dey claimed certain moneys from the Government of France for grain furnished to them in 1796; the Consul paid His Highness a visit in his private summer-house, and there announced that no notice would be taken of the demand. Words

ran high, and the dispute ended in a blow inflicted by His Serene Deyship's fan across the face of M. Deval, the Gallic representative. The latter instantly retired, and the quarrel was taken up by the French nation, with what results we all know.

From this citadel, or Kasba, there is a fine view of the surrounding country: Algiers lying below in a spreading amphitheatre of white walls and Moorish terraces; the harbour, with its noble piers and multitude of shipping; beyond, the glittering sea, stretching away in blue immensity, flecked with myriads of sails, and melting into an impalpable horizon.

Returning into the modern town, I was much struck with the bustling traffic that was going on: heavily-laden mules and rattling carts disputing the narrow road; stalwart negroes, in nothing but a short linen shirt and breeches, carrying great sacks and water-skins, jostling the unwary passengers with little ceremony, and shouting to their fellows as they struggled with their load. Here and there a few benevolent-looking camels, bringing produce from the interior, led by ruffianly

countrymen of forbidding aspect, clothed in the eternal white haik and dirty folds of the burnous; in the midst of all this noise and hubbub, solemn Arabs seated cross-legged on the ground, pondering over their chess with bent brows and wrinkled foreheads, as though there were no such thing as incessant clatter or bewildering confusion.

Being anxious to obtain a sketch of one of the quaint streets of the upper town, I wandered one morning up its dark alleys and intricate byways; and wishing to establish myself at a window (sitting in the narrow street was quite impossible), knocked at a promising-looking door, and was answered by a mysterious voice from behind a lattice above; the door opened of itself, and I marched up the stairs, unmindful of evil. In the upper court I was instantly surrounded by a troop of women, in the picturesque private dress of the Moorish ladies, unencumbered now with veil or yashmak. This dress consists of short pantaloons and jacket of bright material, hidden about the neck and bust by gauzy scarfs and filmy nothings; the hair is plaited in tails with gold and

silver cord, whilst a band of gold pendants, mixed with pearls, encircles the brow, and the arms and neck are heavily loaded with chains and bracelets. and strings of sequins. It is a very rich dress, and well suited to the lavish magnificence of oriental beauty. These ladies dragged at my watch chain, and pulled my hair, until, finding myself in such very questionable society, I beat a hasty retreat, flying down the stairs six steps at a time, first slamming the doors in the faces of the houris, and eventually reached the street in safety, while sundry slow Mussulmans wagged their beards, and said that Christian dogs did not often enter such places with impunity.

I now tried another building, and was much amused in the survey of what seemed to be a regular lodging-house. On the first-floor, a picturesque room, set with Moorish tiles—a negress in bed, her scanty clothing strewn upon the ground; on the next story two dark women dressing, who screamed at sight of me, and tried to hide their heads in their yashmaks; up higher heaps of children, mostly in a state of nature (Moorish nature seems

to imply dirt). At the top of the house a terrace overlooked the town; from thence I looked down into the central court, with its galleries, and its matting, and its large-leaved plants—excessively good as an *ensemble* of rich but subdued colour.

I now met, by a lucky accident, a friend, of the *Crédit Foncier*, who kindly lent me his dragoman to show me the lions of the town. Under his auspices I began the dreadfully steep ascent once again, and diving into the incomprehensible little, twisting streets, may well say that I "remember no more!" I have a dazed recollection of pretty effects of light as we threaded the labyrinth, glimpses of shadowy women at their work in the ghostly courts—in one case a sound of dancing and of castanets—and a generally pervading odour of filth and stuffiness. In time we arrived at an exceedingly picturesque mosque, on the brow of the hill to the north-west of the town, overlooking the sea. This mosque is the gem of the place; it possesses the orthodox white domes and minarets, but they are incrusted with enamelled tiles, which have a novel and most striking effect, forming,

with the blue sea-line and luxurious vegetation, such a "bit of colour" as one finds rarely out here; while some weird palms and straggling fig-trees that rise from among the tombs where muffled figures are kneeling, make the whole thing perfect in its way—giving *shade*, which all this country wants so much.

Hearing sounds of distant music, I wandered on into the Jardin de Marengo, a public garden, where the bands of the French regiments perform daily. Here quite a different scene awaited me. The fashionables of the town grouped under the rare exotic trees, or sauntered up and down the promenade, listening to the strains of Meyerbeer and Verdi. Again the same contrast of dress which had so much struck me on my first arrival. Ladies in the newest Paris fashions, cheek-by-jowl with the white sacks spoken of above. I was much pleased, on the whole, with the costumes of the Moorish men. Their rich turbans, which just show a bit of the red cap and long blue tassel, well become their style of feature; whilst the embroidered jacket, and large, wide trowsers, reach-

ing to the knee, are often exceedingly well chosen as to tone—fine dark-blue cloth, relieved with a delicate claret, or sombre green, or shadowy grey. There was an interesting negro girl walking with her governess—a princess of the Soudan, finishing her education—a young lady of intelligent countenance, very gorgeously got up in cherry silk, and ornaments of massive gold. A few little Arab boys wound in and out of the assembly, selling sweet-scented violets and bouquets of roses. Soon the music ceased, and the crowd dispersed till the same hour the following day.

In the evening I went to have a look at a "Café Maur." It was a low, narrow room, lined with long, high seats, and having ever-open doors, giving on the street. Along the walls, which are covered with many-coloured matting, and decorated with native looking-glasses, rows of stately Arabs in turban and burnous squat crosslegged, talking in low tones, or silently puffing their hasheesh. At one end two musicians, who make Arab music on a tomtom—ye gods, what music!—and in another corner mine host, busy with the

coffee, simmering over the loveliest old stove of antique blue Moorish tiles. Most excellent, by the way, is the "café maur;" much stronger than the French—purer, and with more bouquet.

It is pleasant to wander among the bazaars and shops of the old town. I strolled into an enclosure, where a sale of old clothes was going on. A picturesque sight enough. A square platform, on which stood several Turkish Jews, all holding out their goods, and trying to outcry each other; a motley crowd of bidders, in all the endless costumes of the country. Four white walls enclosed the group in a half-lit courtyard, while the apathetic shopkeepers, in their stalls all round, lay lazily looking on, or quietly working at their trades. An intense light that shone in on the heads of the auctioneers served to give effect to this characteristic scene.

The stalls of the shopmen deserve to be immortalized; little square holes they are, lined cosily with matting, the objects for sale hanging round the walls. The entrances look more like windows than doors, as they are elevated about two

feet from the ground, in order that the seller's face may be on a level with yours, you standing in the street, he sitting cross-legged on his floor. Here he works at his trade, while behind him there is generally to be seen, scarcely distinguishable in the obscurity, a party of friends or associates, who gossip, and smoke, and drink coffee, or stare idly at the buyer, as if wondering what on earth he means by disturbing them.

One evening I was carried off by a stray ragga-muffin to see an Arab fête up in the old town, and certainly anything much more revolting than the whole performance I never expect to see. I am glad to have witnessed it, horrible as it was, for it affords an additional proof, if additional proof be wanting, of the low condition, mental and moral, that has been reached by these miserable people. An old Moorish house, dating from the government of the Beys, admitted us by a narrow passage into a small court, all set with tiles, and surrounded with the orthodox arcade of light stone pillars and horse-shoe arches. From the gallery above, with its swaying blinds and mats

of straw, came every now and then a close-veiled head, with a suspicion of deep black eyes; which head reconnoitred the proceedings, and then bobbed down, and made way for another. When our party entered and took our places (about twelve o'clock P.M.), the orgie was in full swing. Two or three men, labouring under the influence of hasheesh, were bending and bowing and dancing up and down, with a peculiarly maniacal action, strongly suggesting the "Nerves," a dance once popular in our own music-halls.

Their action kept time with the tomtoms and drums, that beat low and muffled, or rose to a dreadful din and clatter, according to the condition of the performers. From time to time new victims rose from their seats, and, with a howl and a cry, joined madly in the devilish ring—wallowing on the ground, and tearing each other's clothes and turbans; whilst their faces gradually assumed an ashy pallor, and perspiration poured in streams down their haggard cheeks. More like beasts than men they appeared at these moments—moping, and mowing, and emitting hideous gutteral noises;

their eyes starting from their heads, and their hands clutching the "woundless air." An old negro, who had arrived at the proper pitch of idiocy, by the help of fumes of vapour emanating from a low table in the centre of the hall, began to evince signs of wishing to do something. So, tenderly supported the while by sympathising hands, he commenced to bare his stomach, and deliberately leaned it on the point of a sharp sword which rested on the ground.* Not content with this, he screwed it into his cheek as far as it would go, and seemed evidently to enjoy the process. More moping and mowing, and more wild, shrieking chants and booming tomtoms, and now an old Arab took the field. Oh! wicked old man, degrading your venerable hairs! How can you hope for the respect of youth, whilst defiling your wicked old head, and perpetrating such hellish rites as these? It made me quite sick with disgust to realize the assimilation of men to brutes that was demonstrated in this repulsive

* I know it was sharp, as I cut a splinter from my walking-stick with it.

scene. Nay, degradation lower than that of brutes, for have not brutes an instinct which teaches them at least to avoid pain? These men, whilst under the influence of hasheesh, are incapable of feeling pain; so they go through antics in the night which they must bitterly repent on the morrow.

Red-hot shovels were brought in, and the wicked old Arab proceeded to lick one of them with his tongue; and, placing it on the ground, deliberately stood on it until the flesh crackled and hissed, and smelt most horribly. We examined his feet, and found them charred; but the custom of going barefoot gave him a horny sole, which protected him from real injury. About that which followed, however, there was no deception, and it was dreadful to witness beyond anything that can be conceived. By dint of working their heads about, and dancing madly over the fumes of the narcotic, two or three of the performers had reached a pitch of aberration that seemed almost beyond insanity; and one wretched creature seized a red-hot coal and held it in his mouth, with cries of fiendish delight; another took one in his hands,

and threw it into the air, the whole party jumping and dancing, and tossing their arms in unison. Very like pandemonium, indeed! The gentleman with the coal in his mouth breathed *through* it, so to speak, and sent forth sparks that in the uncertain light looked as though they came from his inside. A second individual, whose blue complexion and whitened lips betokened an extra strong dose of the opiate, held his mouth over the solitary candle, allowing its flame to burn his tongue and wither his gums; whilst a third from time to time held his eye over the same candle, very much to the detriment, I should imagine, of that valuable organ!

A few pieces of glass were now introduced, and eagerly chumped and swallowed by some crouching figures, whose state evidently did not permit of much movement; whilst a huge piece of thorny cactus was devoured with signs that showed it was very excellent indeed!

At this stage of the proceedings a European lady, who had been growing paler and paler for the last half hour, was obliged to rise and go into

the air. I, too, had felt most uncomfortable, I must confess, but had by this time quite got over it, consoled by the reflection that the more such wretches suffered for their folly, and the sooner they were burned up and exterminated off the face of the earth, the better for the honour of mankind in general.

The orgie promised no termination as yet, for as fast as one victim sank into heavy slumber from exhaustion, another rose, howling, to take his place; so, having had quite enough of the lowering spectacle, we rose to go; and I certainly felt humbled, as I walked slowly home, to think that human nature—made in God's image and in His likeness—should be capable of sinking into such an abyss of hideous degradation. The question naturally rises, "Why do the authorities permit such scenes in the very capital of the colony?" Because they really have but little jurisdiction within the circle of the old town. To attempt to stop these semi-religious orgies they would have to introduce the soldiery, and this would end in a work of extermination.

Wandering in search of the picturesque one morning, I came upon the principal Catholic church, which occupies the most imposing position in one of the most important squares. It was formerly a mosque, and, consequently, its interior ornaments clash oddly with our ideas of ecclesiastical decoration.

In 1838 Algiers was erected into a bishopric by papal bull, as it was thought unwise to leave the entire direction of spiritual administration to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (which has been established here ever since the time of the saint himself), considering that the number of Catholics were daily augmenting; they now number upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand. The Protestant population is estimated at five thousand, and that of the Jewish people at thirty thousand, whilst the Mussulman religion counts as many as two millions. Algiers can now (since February, 1867) boast of three bishops and an archbishop.

The chief drawback to Algiers is, in my opinion, the total absence of any walks within a

short distance of the town. If you choose to traverse the sandy plains that come up to the houses at each end of the town, there are country roads enough, but they are hardly worth the trouble of half an hour's struggling in hot sand under a burning sun. There are pleasant drives into the hills among the many villas, where the prickly cactus and pointed aloe vie with the olive and the sombre pine.

At a distance of about a mile outside the town, and close to the water's edge, lies the Jardin d'Essai, the principal one of the eighteen acclimatization gardens established by Government in Algeria at the time of the occupation. It is a beautiful pleasure-ground, such as none but the French have the genius to make. Avenues of stately palms, amongst which are trained tendrils of a large species of convolvulus, that hangs from the fanlike branches in rich festoons of colour; oranges and lemons in profusion; vistas of delicate green, and masses of dark grey olive, with glimpses of the blue Mediterranean beyond—such is the aspect of the garden, most refreshing to the

eye wearied with the heat and intolerable dust. In this and the other gardens sprinkled through the country, are tried all kinds of exotic plants, with the intention of introducing at some future time such of them as shall be proved to suit the climate. Thus we find tea and indigo, rice and colza, opium and india-rubber all growing side by side, whilst the sugar-cane and the bamboo flourish in such immense thickets as to afford a pleasant resting-place and most delightful shade.

I woke up about three o'clock on the morning of the second of January, 1867, with a strange feeling of sea-sickness and a sensation like the tossing of a ship. I thought it was a dream, and lay in a pleasant state between sleeping and waking, until there suddenly arose a rushing wind, with a banging of doors and shrieking of women, and a rush of many feet, which effectually roused me. I felt the room reel, and opening my eyes, caught a glimpse of tables falling over and shutters swaying to and fro. At the same time the bed seemed to slip from under me, and there was a horrid grating sound in the bowels of the earth,

like the drawing of some monstrous tooth. I felt instinctively that it was an earthquake; and my only impression was not of danger, but of utter helplessness, watching to see the walls give way every minute, and speculating upon how soon the house would fall. The shock was very violent, and lasted upwards of twenty seconds, though to me it seemed years; and I had time to remember that the hotel stood on the built-up arches of the quay, and to wonder whether we should soon be plunged into the depths of stone below, among the stored-up specimens of the museum, and the dripping arcades of the fishmarket.

In those few seconds the contents of the museum rose before me, and I thought of the stuffed lions and hyenas, and the inane figures of Moorish ladies in brocade and paste ornaments tottering against the wall. It never occurred to me to have the slightest feeling of fear—only a cold sensation down the back, and a painful drawing of the breath whilst the room was heaving up and down. I opened my door, and looking into the passage, could not restrain a laugh at the strange congre-

gation there assembled. There was a trembling Frenchman kneeling on the stairs in such abject terror that he could not speak. I remarked to him that it was an earthquake, and the sound of my voice seemed to renew his agonies of fear, for he crouched down on the stone-step and shivered and moaned most piteously. There were three ladies, too, clinging to the wall, one of them sobbing, the others pattering Aves at railroad speed; further down the staircase were groups of people, some clasping each other closely, and others talking in low whispers, glancing fearfully about the while. Most wonderful costumes that morning saw the light of day, and many were the deceptions caused by the *deshabille* of the charmers of the night before.

Presently there was another shock, much milder than the last, and I opened my window and looked out. Rain was coming down in torrents from the heavy leaden sky, and the whole street was alive with crowds of panic-stricken people rushing to the comparative safety of the Grande Place, with their children and their valuables—not that the

Grande Place was the least safe, as it is built (like all the fashionable quarter) on several tiers of arches which form the boulevard, and are occupied by public offices. It is dreadful to think what a pile of ruins would have been modern Algiers had all these arches given way!

The Grande Place offered the most melancholy spectacle, encumbered as it was with weeping women crouching in the mud, whilst all the vessels and boats that were within reach bore a heavy freight of men and women, whose instincts taught them to flee from the writhing earth. None of the houses in the European quarter suffered seriously; many windows were broken, and some walls were split in fissures from the top to the bottom. In the Arab quarter, many of the old Moorish houses gave way, though they are so closely packed up there that none could actually fall.

The entire population stood in anxious knots about the streets all the morning, waiting for news from the interior, which should assure them of the safety or death of friends and relations; and it

was sad to see some of them walking slowly away from time to time, with a smothered sob or moan of anguish, as their worst fears were realized. At Blidah, a little town not far from Algiers, much harm was done; whilst the villages of Mouzaia and El Affroun were swept away completely. The following extracts are quoted from the *Spectator* with reference to the shocks which were felt at Blidah :—

"At 7.15 on the morning of the 2nd I was roused from sleep by a sound as of some one beating the floor above and the walls on every side. It increased rapidly in violence, till the whole house shook, and rocked, and seemed giving way beneath our feet. I saw the wall in the corner of the room split and open, and immediately afterwards masses of plaster fell from the ceiling and walls, bringing clouds of dust and a darkness as of night. I lay cowering in bed from some unaccountable impulse, which made me fancy myself safer there, as I heard the crashing of the falling wood and plaster, and the awful sound of the walls being cracked and rent apart. An age of

ever-increasing horror seemed to pass (in reality, I believe, scarcely thirty seconds), till I heard my husband's voice calling me to fly. I rushed blindly to the door and out into the corridor, guided by the most piercing shrieks. In one instant we thought on our friends on the floor above, where the danger, of course, was so much greater. Thank God! they stood in safety beside us. All the inmates of the hotel were running wildly about, some tearing down stairs out into the street. The women's screams and cries were what first made me feel actually afraid, and caused me to realise that all these terrible sights and sounds meant danger to life and limb. The shock was so sudden—so wholly without preparation—that the mind was absorbed only in the consciousness of the Unknown, in the new and awful experience. So little, indeed, did any of us know what our peril was, that we remained in the house more than a quarter of an hour after the first shock, the landlord assuring us all was over. As we had literally nothing on but our night-dresses, we at length went back to our rooms, and

hastily gathered up some clothing, which we put on how and where we could, in the open passage, heedless of the people running to and fro, collecting their valuables. It was no time for conventionalities. Our friends, on venturing up the tottering staircase, found their rooms choked with plaster and rubbish, the walls separated from the shaking floor, which hardly seemed firm enough to bear their weight, the whole a complete scene of ruin, while on the pillow of one of them lay a large mass of wood, almost too heavy to lift. She had happily sprung from her bed instantaneously at the first alarm.

"A fresh, though slighter shock, now drove us from the house, where we had already tarried foolishly long, and the cry was, 'To the Place!' Thither we rushed in the pouring rain. It was already crowded with people from all parts of the town, in the most pitiable condition: Some half dressed; some crying bitterly; some wringing their hands, lamenting the loss of their little all, their stock in trade ruined and shattered, their houses rent from top to bottom, in some cases

level with the earth. Numbers of poor Jewesses sat crouching on the wet ground, holding their sobbing children, rocking themselves to and fro, and moaning loudly, while above all rose ever and anon the wailing sound of the cavalry trumpets and the rolling of the drum, calling on the soldiers to quit their tottering barracks. A sick French lady, apparently dying, was carried out in her bed on to the "Place." She lay white and motionless, while the most curious and least scrupulous crowded round her. The Arabs alone stalked about unmoved, shrugging their shoulders, and muttering, "It is destiny!"

I heard by chance that there were two gentlemen organizing a party to make a journey in the interior, so I immediately resolved to join the expedition, if it were in any way practicable; for the country of Kabylie is still in so independent a state as to be exceedingly dangerous for a single traveller. There is safety in numbers, they say, and in this case the axiom was fully verified. We discussed our arrangements over a cup of the purest "Mocha" in the Café Maur, and drew up a plan

of operations which promised a most interesting two months' trip.

It was finally settled to travel by diligence as far as Tizi-Ouzou, and thence plunge on horseback into the mountain country of the Djerjura, a district almost unexplored in some parts by European travellers. The party was to consist of four: a Scotch merchant from Glasgow—an English medical man—"Hamoud," our dragoman—and myself. Thus Great Britain was to be fully represented—an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman, under the guidance of a Turkish Arab. The afore-mentioned Turkish Arab was very great in all that he was going to do for us: "He knew the country like his pocket," he said, "for was he not the most celebrated dragoman in all Algeria?"

We took all he said for gospel in this early stage of our wanderings, but soon had cause to repent us of our folly, for Hamoud was without exception the greatest liar and most consummate idler I ever came across. He did not know the road a bit, trusting entirely for his information to the native

guides whom we took up from place to place. Such a burden, indeed, did we eventually find him, that we christened him the "thorn in our side;" and happy was the moment, and big with satisfaction, when we bade him a last farewell on the terrace at Algiers.

CHAPTER II.

ALGERIA, POLITICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY CONSIDERED.

BEFORE starting for the interior, it may be well to examine cursorily the political and geographical features of the country; its climate and its population.

Algeria is two hundred and fifty French leagues in length, and occupies a superficies of one hundred and fifty million acres. It is divided by man into three provinces—that of Algiers in the centre, that of Constantine on the East, and of Oran on the West; and it is separated by nature into three zones, or grand divisions, which influence the climate and the character of the ground.

The first of these zones, commencing from the coast, is called by the natives *Tell*, from an Arab word signifying *hill*. It occupies a surface of

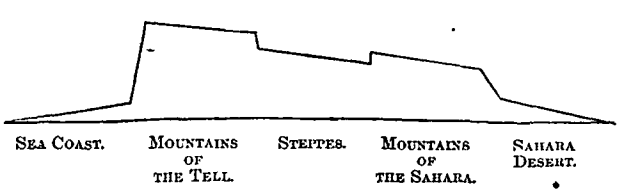
fifteen million acres, and has been justly called the granary of Algeria, for it is the scene of all cultivation and crops, as well as of the great forest lands of the country. It enjoys an exceptionally advantageous position, for it is as rich in calcareous deposit as in alluvial soil. Besides this, it is well-watered on the whole throughout its entire extent, though there is much that remains to be done in the way of draining and the clearing away of brushwood.

The Tell is divided by a long bony structure of hills, running parallel to the sea (the Greater and Lesser Atlas), from the next division, or zone, that of the *Steppes*. This is the zone of pasturage, as the Tell is that of cultivation. It consists of a series of vast plains, seemingly without limit, which are admirably adapted for the rearing of sheep. These plateaux are enclosed, along the North, by the mountains of the Tell, and along the South by the chain of the Sahara, beyond which again stretch the interminable wastes of the Great Desert. Thus, while the Tell promises the colonist a rich harvest in cereal crops, the Steppes assure him an abund-

ance of animal food, as well as the wool wherewithal he may be clothed.

The *Sahara* embraces the vast plains of Central Africa, a region of sand and waste and desolation; it is dotted here and there with small patches of green, reclaimed by springs and wells from the tracks of barrenness around. These patches are called *oases*, from El-Ouah, an Egyptian expression for an "isolated habitation." The oases are given up to the cultivation of the henna and the palm, under whose grateful shade small quantities of corn and fruit-trees flourish. The palm yields an abundant annual crop of the dates which form almost the only food of the tribes inhabiting the desert.

The natural features of the country will be better understood from the following diagram:—



Consequent upon the varied elevation of the

land is a great variety of climate; the temperature ranges from perpetual snow to tropical heat. Four distinctly different climates may be reckoned in Algeria: that of the coast, which is under the influence of the sea; that of the hills, which is healthy and bracing; that of the Steppes, which is feverish and damp; and that of the desert, which is hot and dry.

February is usually the coldest month, and August the most unbearable from heat. The Sirocco wind is very prevalent, and originates in the Sahara. It is like air that has passed through an oven, bringing with it languor and lassitude, and bearing in its breath an impalpable red dust, which penetrates painfully into the eyes and nose and skin. Its heat averages a hundred and thirty degrees in summer, and a hundred degrees in winter.

There is a population in Algeria of about three million souls, which is composed of very dissimilar elements. The colonists number about 250,000; the rest is composed of pure Arabs (estimated at not more than 500,000) and Arab-Kabyles, in

which term I comprise the half-bred Arabs, Turks, and Israelites, as well as the Moors or Arab dwellers in the towns.

The taxes in force in the Tell, or cultivated portion of Algeria, are of two distinct kinds:—The *Achour*, or tenth part of the crops; and the *Zekkat*, or tax on cattle;* and great complaints are raised against the financial department for their maladministration.

In the first place, the system of taxing *productions* in a country situated as Algeria now is, must necessarily be a bad one, on account of the difficulty of arriving at the truth; it is no easy matter to obtain an exact list of the extent and number of acres worked, with the names of their proprietors, in a land of which portions are so little under jurisdiction, and whose superficial extent is so large in proportion to the population. This difficulty got over, others rise to fill its place. The yield of every acre and its approximate value has to be calculated for every separate tribe, bearing

* This is an impost of 1 sheep in 100; 1 ox in 30; and 1 camel in 40.

in mind that the price of a hectolitre varies according to the distance of the tribe from an European market. It is the business of the Kaid to draw up an annual report of the extent of cultivated land in his district, as well as of the number of beasts. Land is measured by the amount which two oxen are capable of working in a season; about twenty-five acres. Now, if the Kaids and native chiefs could be endowed with any sort of probity, there might be some chance of arriving somewhere near the truth; but the ideas of a people are not to be modified in a day. From time immemorial their public functions have been looked upon by those in authority among the Arabs as *farms*, to be worked as much as possible for their own private interests. As the Kaids receive their salaries out of the taxes collected, instead of being paid a fixed yearly sum, it is easily to be imagined that they are confirmed in their original impression, grinding down the unfortunate donors according to the presents they receive towards the swelling of their private incomes.

Another grievous difficulty arises in the system of *exemptions*. Amongst the tillers of the soil are some who pay no taxes at all, and others that pay for only a portion of their land. This plan was instituted as a sort of premium or reward for services rendered, and is liable to grave abuse. The privilege is in the hands of the Bureaux Arabes (or offices charged with administration), to be bestowed according to their judgment, and may thus be given indiscriminately, until the real state of the case becomes most difficult to determine. The taxes are not heavy in themselves, but become so through their manner of being administered. They pass through numberless hands, which hands being chiefly Arab, it is easily conceivable that something sticks to every palm.

Over and above the Achour and the Zekkat are numberless smaller and yet vexatious claims, such as the Touiza and the Corvées. Animals are constantly in requisition for transport—either for the moving of a garrison, or the private wants of a Bureau Arabe; and the requisite number of beasts of burden is instantly taken from the

neighbouring tribe, regardless of harvest-time, or any other cause which may render a forced loan particularly inconvenient to the proprietor at the moment.

In the Sahara matters are arranged with more success. Instead of the Achour and the Zekkat, one tax alone exists—that of the *Lezma*, or payment of forty centimes to every square foot of date-garden. This admits of no abuse, as the date-gardens of the oases are all down in the Government books, and may be calculated to a square inch, if necessary.

A new era, however, is at hand. A Senatus-Consultum of 1863 decreed the division of the soil occupied by the tribes into separate parcels, by which arrangement each family—nay, each individual, will be possessed of his own private fraction; and then the tax will come upon the land of the Tell as evenly as upon the date-garden of the Sahara. This plan will of course necessitate much labour and difficulty, but will probably come into operation in a very few years' time. It is much to be doubted, however, whether such a

sudden revulsion in the established order of things will be tolerated by the dark-brained native, even though it be for his own advantage. He has been in the habit of looking upon the earth as God's, and through Him the right of the noble his representative, and it is more than possible that, driven by the traditions of the past and the injunctions of the Koran, he may refuse to throw off the yoke of *seigneurie*, and wrap himself in his impenetrable impersonality—the "non-individuality of the member of a tribe," which is so distinct a characteristic of the Arab in contradistinction to the Kabyle. It must be admitted, however, that the noblesse, who would be the natural instigators of such a movement, are fast dying out, and therefore there will be the less opposition to that individuality which must be formed before the new state of things can come into force. The system of cantonment, if it ever be made to work, will, at any rate, accomplish one grand object. It will restrain the Arab from wandering, and thus leave new territory ready for those who can restore life where death now reigns supreme.

Colonel Colomb, author of several remarkable works, tells us that the land of Ouled-Sidi-Sheikh —now in insurrection—was at one time such a terrestrial paradise that legends were related of its groves and waters. The country is now a sterile desert, nicknamed by the colonists the "land of thirst." This is not astonishing; the Arab holds labour in such horror that everything withers under his accursed hand.

CHAPTER III.

ARAB AND KABYLE.

WE started off before daylight on the third of January, in the open coupé of the diligence, leaving the people of Algiers in a state of alarm and uncertainty as to the probabilities of a recurrence of the earthquake. In course of time the sun rose and showed us the country through which we were travelling—tracts of red moorland, that gave place presently to dense woods of olive and almond-trees, with an undergrowth of red lilies, and a species of wild azalia. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, attended by the usual long-draped figure of the shepherd, defiled before us; whilst troops of country-people in white burnouses were seen winding down the mountain roads, preceded by well-laden mules and camels.

The sun was shining on the rugged hills, when suddenly, and most unexpectedly, the sky was darkened, and we found ourselves drenched by an African shower before we had time to don our mackintoshes—a violent storm of rain, thunder and lightning, and a high wind, such sheets of water as no covering could resist; swollen rivulets rushing down the road, and in five minutes everything bright and sparkling as before.

As we neared Tizi-Ouzou, after a drive of twelve hours, the features of the country changed once more—cultivated tracts and fields of barley giving way before ranges of high precipitous hills, without the vestige of a tree; here and there a bamboo hut, with its cactus palisading seven feet in height —an efficient protection for property indeed! The natives by the way-side looked the very picture of misery, shivering and shaking, with blue cheeks and chattering teeth, under the influence of the recent shower. No wonder they were cold; their only dress consisted of a cotton shirt and thin woollen burnous, and perhaps a red cap, bound round with a ragged handkerchief. Those of a

higher class in life are very warmly clad, although on the same principle. They wear warm short breeches under the cotton shirt or *gondoura*, while the silken web of the haik, wrapped in ample folds about the head and neck, has a look of comfort which is not belied by the two or three burnouses that are worn one over the other. A pair of short socks and round-toed shoes completes the well-to-do Arab's costume; and very picturesque it is, all white, and carried with the dignity these men know so well how to assume.

We had now done with the Arabs proper, and found ourselves in the land of Kabylie, the territory of the most independent people in the whole of Northern Africa.

Tizi-Ouzou is a little town, consisting of one wide street of long low houses; it stands on the Oued-Sabao, the great river of Kabylie, which divides the country into two by a great valley, and is fed by the mountain streams of the Djerjura. There is nothing noticeable about it, as it is entirely of modern construction. We were pleased to find a clean little inn, whose respectable exterior

showed that we should not yet have to commence the "rough work" for which we were prepared.

After dinner we received a visit from the Sheikh, who drank brandy and water, oblivious, for the time being, of the Koran's fiat against fermented liquors. He was much astonished at my watch, which is a repeater, and evidently thought an aneroid something very extraordinary indeed. He is a fine, tall, and excessively dignified old man, a celebrated character in the Kabyle war—by name Silounis—and evidently very proud of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour which he wears pinned on his burnous. He told us that he still had seven bullets in his body—pleasant relics of petty guerilla warfare! We obtained a recommendation from him to his brother at Fort Napoleon, who would, he said, give us every facility for pursuing our journey.

Even unaccustomed to the native type as we were, we could not fail to remark the difference in the personal appearance of this man from that of the Arabs we had been in the habit of seeing. There was something free and noble in his ges-

tures, smacking of the independence of the mountaineer.

The people who are included by the ignorant under the common denomination of "Arabs," consist really of two distinct nations, as different in manners, customs, and character as it is well possible for nations to be. The one set really belongs to the country, sprung from the very blood of the African soil, so to speak; the other, of Asiatic origin, having emerged from Eastern Arabia in the ninth century, are in reality strangers, fixed to the land by no ties of nationality, although they are the *soi-disant* proprietors of the soil. The former are the *Kabyles*, whilst the latter are the *Arab* people. History shows us that these Arabs passed over Northern Africa in a devastating torrent, destroying and overwhelming everything in their passage; and that in those cases where their ruinous track was obliterated, it was done by Mussulman princes of Barbère or Kabyle origin.

The condition in which we find the Kabyle race of to-day corresponds exactly with that which

tradition tells us of their past. The Kabyles, industrious traders and arboriculturists, are stationary dwellers in the towns and villages; while the Arabs, naturally nomade, and bound by no serious ties to the soil, are dwellers in tents for the most part, treating Mother Earth like prodigal sons, abusing her fruits, and denying her the smallest care. The traveller can satisfy himself at a glance as to whether he is wandering in Arab or in Kabyle territory. The former barely scrapes the ground with his primitive tools, neither removing stones nor disturbing the existing vegetation; he carefully respects the weeds that be, leaving the dwarf-palms and the artichoke to grow in close proximity to his miserable crop.

The Kabyles proper, being in the minority, are restricted in their possessions, and make a foot produce its full value, both with regard to cereal cultivation and the bringing up of sheep and oxen. Though their cattle are few in number, they make shift to provide a shelter for them in times of rain; whilst the Arabs, possessors of unlimited stretches of pasture-land, leave their sheep

to sicken and die with no sort of protection or provision. Thus their losses in the rainy season, with its torrents of water and sudden cold, often rise to several million head in a few weeks. Though cattle are a great source of riches to the Arab, he bears their loss with equanimity, and without even learning a wholesome lesson thereby, for "is it not God who gives and takes away? His will be done." He cares for his cattle because they cause him little trouble, giving him milk for his sustenance, and providing also the wool which his wives (the only real workers under the tent-awning) spin and weave into garments, and even the tent itself, in which he lives and has his being.

The Kabyles are sprinkled thinly amongst the Arab population, more especially in the regions of the Sahara; though the real nucleus of the nation —in fact, the only unadulterated and genuine people of that name—live separate and alone in the mountain fastnesses of "Grande Kabylie," the high hilly district to the east of Algiers, that may be compared in some sort to our own Wales, be-

fore it became English and denationalized as it is at present.

Though a little tainted in the course of time by the ever-changing masters of North Africa, the Kabyles still retain a great amount of independence and peculiarity. Strong in their position amid the hills, and admitting of no laws save those of work and liberty, they have ever resisted conquest and invasion, until they at length succumbed, a few short years ago, to the French dominion.

I use the word "succumb" perhaps unadvisedly, for though beaten in their battles, and compelled to pay tribute to the government of the conqueror, yet they manage their own affairs, and fight out their own quarrels, certain of non-intervention on the part of the French, except in such a case as when a European finds himself mixed up in their broils. Under these circumstances a detachment is sent down from Fort Napoleon or Bougie, to inquire into the cause of strife. If the European has suffered injury or has been killed, the Kaid of the tribe on whose territory the deed was com-

mitted is called to account, and the entire tribe is made to suffer. It thus becomes a matter of self-interest to those in power to keep out of quarrels with Europeans, as stern justice is enforced, in spite of the leaning of the French functionaries to the side of the indigenous population.

Kabylie is a state of essentially democratic organization, is in sufficient possession of the franchise even to satisfy Messrs. Bright and Beales, and is, in fact, an exact representation, or rather reproduction, of those governments of the fifth and sixth centuries, to which historians have given the title of Republic. Every village of any importance sends its representative to the general assembly, which member is elected by a majority of votes of all *capable of bearing arms* in the village. They assemble under the shade of some gigantic olive, or on the borders of a burial-ground; and the taleb, or wise man, having opened the proceedings with a prayer, the election is proceeded with, and often ends in a noisy and bloody struggle, which divides the little group of houses into two parties, and keeps the streets run-

ning with blood for weeks together. The member finally elected possesses but little power, after all, being governed in all things by public opinion, which guides and determines the acts of the puppet beforehand down to the smallest particulars. Electoral quarrels have sometimes reached such a pitch that foreign intervention has been called in; now, of course, it is done no more, as all grave matters of dispute are referred to French arbitration.

The division of the people into tribes seems to be determined by the nature of the ground. The mamelon represents the commune, the mountain the tribe, and the chain of mountains the confederation, or "kbila," from which word the province takes its name. Each little red-roofed village that one sees dotted over the landscape has a sort of private little government of its own, owing allegiance to the general assembly. In times long gone by, certain opulent families exercised a suzerainty over certain districts, but that was almost in the fabulous days of the past. This republic has been compared to Switzerland, but it

differs widely in many essential points from the Helvetian Cantons. One of the most remarkable points of resemblance exists in the "Soff," or offensive and defensive leagues that often tear the country with civil war. Certain communes join together, in these cases, in opposition to the rest. These factions last for centuries, so that the *kbila*, or general assembly, is almost always a scene of quarrel and of heart-burning.

The motive power of justice and of right consists of the *Eurf* and the *Kanoun*, the former a system of traditional law, passed orally from father to son, and descending from remote antiquity. The latter is the penal code—a minute declaration of punishments to be inflicted for every conceivable misdemeanour. In some of these edicts it is possible to trace relics of Etruria and ancient Rome—for instance, in the duties of hospitality, rigidly enforced by all, and the inviolable right of sanctuary.* Many writers

* "Vous nous en voulez parceque nous donnons refuge à des gens qui sont vos ennemis, et cependant nous ne faisons que suivre la loi de Dieu. Quelle confiance auriez-vous en

trace the word kanoun from the Greek *kànon*—a vague Christian souvenir of ecclesiastical canons—an opinion justified by the name still borne by the laws at present in operation among the Myrdites and Albanian Greeks, *i.e.*, Canounes Lechi. Both the Eurf and the Kanoun vary in a slight degree in the different villages, but this is easily accounted for by the fact of their belonging to oral tradition. No authority could fight against the moral power of these laws; their excessive antiquity, and the admirable manner in which they fit the requirements of the mountain tribes, render them an everlasting institution, well adapted to the profound spirit of justice, and the thirst

nous quand vous entrerez dans nos montagnes, si des à présent nous livrons entre vos mains ceux qui sont venus nous demander l'hospitalité? Répondez, et dites si vous ne feriez pas vous-même ce que vous nous reprochez. Notre Anaya est le makhzen (autorité) qui nous a gouvernés jusqu'à ce jour; la poudre a fait taire les familles qui voulaient porter le trouble parmi nous; nous nous aimons l'un et l'autre, car ils nous ont permis de régler nos affaires sans que nous ayons besoin d'un concours étranger; le jour où nous cesserons d'en faire cas sera celui de notre décadence." —*Lettre d'une Djêma de la Tribu des Guechtoula au Commandant Supérieur de Dra-El-Mizane*, 1851.

for equality which characterize the Kabyle race. There is no reason, however, why they should not eventually be grafted on the French code. It would be a delicate work, but a possible one; for the Kanoun has this advantage over Mussulman institutions, in that *it bears in no way upon religion*, whereas among the Arabs it is impossible to touch on any order of ideas without trenching on the faith of Islam and shocking some religious prejudice. The Eurf and the Kanoun take their place before religion. The Kabyles are not fanatical; work and material interests are their deities, and for them the Koran is as a closed book. The marabouts, or holy men, exist in this country as well as among the Arabs. Tradition dates their introduction to a migration from Morocco long ago. Profiting by the never-ending quarrels of the Kabyles, they settled on neutral ground, and established an influence over the ignorant minds of the mountaineers by their superior learning and religious aspect. Neutral themselves, they often stopped hostilities, until, upon the arrival of the French, foreseeing the rise of a new star fatal to

their power, they commenced a steady opposition, rendered all the more formidable by its religious covering.

Slavery has ever been held in abhorrence by this brave and noble people; it is worthy of remark that certain slaves, given by the oriental powers of the day to the religious establishments of the country, were instantly set at liberty.

It is most surprising to find amongst a nation whom we call barbarians a political system perfected in all its parts, and social institutions that by their generosity might well put to the blush the civilized nations of the North. It is a pity that their enlightenment should go no farther than their own hearthstones; that they should have so little liberality for the stranger, and so little care for the life of the European.

The anomaly presented by the existence of a tiny spot of light where there is so much darkness, may be explained by the fact that with the exception of the Mussulman religion, introduced by the Arabs, their entire system may be traced from Roman and Christian civilization, kept comparatively in-

tact by their mountain barriers and intense nationality. It is wonderful that any writers should give the preference, as some have done, to Arab over Kabyle tribes, the former of whom have never risen out of patriarchal life, and who have in all times and all places repulsed anything like progress, as antipathetic to their nature.

We have seen that the Kabyle system of government is democratic. That of the Arabs is purely aristocratic. Its principal characteristics are the influence of consanguinity, derived from their interpretation of the laws of Mohammed, and a delicate appreciation of distinctions of rank. Thus, a *douar*, or circle of tents, is formed by the head of a family, who groups the dwellings of his children and near relations around his own, and a *tribe* consists of a series of douars, which make up a reunion of families, all springing from a common stock.

The leading individual in a douar is called a *Sheikh*; he governs his little circle according to his lights, and is in turn directed by the *Kaid* or head of the whole tribe. The douar must not be looked

upon as an administrative division, but as a large family bound together by similar sympathies and interests, led by the opinion of a few chief men, who are invested with a species of moral authority; for the Sheikh is not such a very important personage, the real government being done by the Kaid, or in some cases by an hereditary chief (under French superintendance), assisted by the Kadi, who sees that justice is administered according to civil and religious jurisprudence.

The Arabs reckon three distinct grades of aristocracy; *i.e.*, original, temporal or military, and religious.

The original noblemen are *Chérifs*, or those who count direct descent from Fatma Zohra, the daughter of the prophet. It was Mohammed himself who founded this much honoured class, enjoining, in several passages of the Koran, that respect be paid to the blessed who sprang from his blood. The temporal or military nobles are those who trace their lineage from the warriors of the East, fellow-workers with the prophet; whilst the religious aristocracy are men devoted to the precepts of the

Koran, and who receive the title of *marabout*. They are sacred in the eyes of their compeers; their words are oracles; and their prayers go straight to heaven. They date their origin generally from some holy man—an enthusiast or a lunatic (for here all madmen are looked upon as struck by God, and consequently holy)—they are often of great use in quelling bloodshed, and still oftener a dangerous firebrand for the dissemination of fanatical outrage.

Though hallowed by the tradition of the past, it does not by any means follow that they lead a pious life. The majority do so, at any rate in form, while some commit every kind of excess, guarded by the cloak of superstition from the resentment of the crowd; for the Arab is very superstitious, covering himself and his horse with talismans, as a preservative against death, sickness, or the evil eye. He is vain, obsequious, humble, and arrogant by turns, is always at heart a liar and a thief, and hopelessly lazy both in body and in spirit.

An example of the bad faith of the Arab chiefs

appeared in a newspaper a short time ago. M. C. Mazurel, head of a large commercial establishment at Tourcoing, advanced considerable sums to certain puissant chiefs in Oran, in exchange for the fleeces of their flocks, which were to be forwarded to him as soon as they were fit for transit. The chiefs received the several hundreds of thousand francs in question, and carefully forgot their own part of the agreement, and the unfortunate M. Mazurel has never received indemnity in any form up to this day! They are as cruel and cold-blooded as they are false and thieving, and are even now guilty of all sorts of atrocities, whenever occasion will permit.

A terrible example of this occurred in 1830, when the General in command was marching eastward, for the chastisement of some rebellious tribes. On the eve of battle he felt anxious to be unshackled by his wounded and his sick, and therefore organized a convoy, under the charge of a doctor, to conduct them back to Bona. According to all appearance, no danger was to be apprehended; and the chiefs of the surrounding

country having staked their *honour* (?) on the safety of the little band, the cavalcade went off, headed by the chiefs in person, and a crowd of Sheikhs and Kaids, and the *élite* of Arab cavaliers. On the first night of bivouac these noble men of honour became aware that their guests consisted only of sick and wounded and incapables, so they immediately rose up and massacred every man—not one remained to tell the horrid tale!

According to the Arabs, the Kabyle *has a stone for brains*, for he is dull of understanding. According to the Kabyles, the Arab has not a stone, but the *vellum of a drum*, which resounds in the slightest wind, and drives him mad. I look at him now with the eye of memory, and I see—the Arab with his steed; a shepherd, whose flocks are guarded but by dogs; a grave man seated cross-legged, telling his beads, or discussing gutturally the last fluctuations in French politics; whilst his wives, wretched slaves of *fainéant* kings, work till they drop over their household cares, rubbing down sometimes the afore-mentioned steed, whose flanks

will soon be bleeding from the spur-thrusts of his lord—for the Arab never walks when he can ride. I gaze over the vast tracts under Arab cultivation, and see nothing but hills denuded of their trees; cornfields choked with weeds; sour milk and sour butter enclosed in rancid goat-skins; everything out of its place, everything telling of ruin, of decay, and degradation. The annual report laid before the Corps Législatif tells the same old story every year:—Industry active with the Kabyles; *nil*, or nearly so, among the Arabs.

The Kabyles of the plains, about a million in number, might well be called Kabyle-Arabs, and looked upon as a link between the pure-bred Kabyle of the mountains of Kabylie and the pure-bred Arab, whose life is laziness. They descended from their mountains from time to time; and though giving way a little to Arab notions, retained for the most part their love of work and spirit of rectitude. They inhabit chiefly the oases of the Desert and a few villages in the Steppes and Tell; they speak the Arabic tongue, and profess the Mussulman religion. Between the Kabyles

of the mountains, who have preserved the originality of their race and Roman traditions, and the Kabyles of the plains, exposed to every invasion, and submitted to every revolution, there is but one essential difference—the first have escaped the demoralizing influence of Arab contiguity; the second have been unable to do so.

The Kabyles are of a different type from the Arab, having a large head and wide forehead; they are smaller, as a rule, than the Arabs proper; sturdy and robust; very often with red hair and a bright complexion. Their language is different from the Arab, though they use many Arab words, which probably crept in with the use of the Koran. They very rarely have more than one wife, who holds a high position amongst them, as a companion and a friend, exciting them against the enemy, and often dying in avenging their fate. As a natural consequence of her freedom, the Kabyle woman goes unveiled, is sometimes very handsome, and nearly always imposing, from her height and peculiar dress and ornaments. It is strange that, with all their enlightenment, these

people can be ferocious as savages. The terrible vendetta exists among them, as in Corsica, an awful heirloom from father to son. They are fond of warlike songs and dances; and though abhorring lying and theft within their own circle, they yet encourage these unenviable qualities amongst strangers.

The population of Kabylie may be estimated at 800,000, sprinkled over 3,000 villages and hamlets. It is formed entirely of Kabyles proper, who are the natural enemies of the Arabs, centuries of warfare having widened between them a gulf of hatred which is reciprocal. They have always been first-rate soldiers. The Carthaginian armies under Hannibal were exclusively drawn from this nation* (I now speak of the original nation, once the possessors of North Africa, of which the present inhabitants of Kabylie are the only true remnants). The Arab cavalry that invaded Spain would have recoiled from so adventurous an undertaking, unsupported by Kabyle infantry. The Algerine fleet under the Turks was built of

* "Histoire Universelle," tome iii., p. 546.

Kabyle wood, and manned by Kabyle sailors. At present, in Algeria, of the two indigenous corps, the *Spahis*, or native cavalry (3,700 in number), belong to Arab tents; while the *Turkos*, or native infantry (9,500 in number), come from Kabyle villages; and there is little doubt which of the two is of most value! The Turkos fought bravely in the Crimea, in Italy, and Mexico; the Spahis are, after all, not much more than a body of police. They are fine riders, and reallybrave when put to the trial; but the last insurrection in the Sahara has thrown grave doubts upon their fidelity.

As far as concerns colonists, the whole province of Kabylie is to them a dead letter. The land is so densely populated already, that it will admit of no augmentation; whilst the difficulties of transit, and continual personal danger, would effectually quench the ardour of a European capitalist. Labour is at such a discount, that from fifteen to twenty thousand of the mountaineers descend annually into the plains, where they are much sought after by the colonists, on account of their superior industry.

A project has been promulgated, having for its object the improvement of the Arab by contact with the Kabyle. The plan proposed is to entice the surplus population of the Djerjura into the plains, forming Kabyle villages in the heart of the Arab country, governed by Kabyle laws, and ruled by Kabyle institutions. These villages are to be scattered as much as possible, but united by good roads, constructed at Government expense. An exemption from taxes would prove a powerful stimulus to such a proposition, whilst an exclusive right of possession over the ground parcelled out would be the only certain guarantee that could draw the native colonists permanently from their hills. Their natural love of work, and powerful democratic element, might thus, by daily contact, infuse a new life into the remains of the rapidly-declining Arab race, whilst the immediate results of the infusion of the new blood would be the proper cultivation of the ground, and the replanting of the forests devastated by destructive Arab generations.

Arboriculture is a speciality of the Kabyle.

"Better a man killed than a tree cut down!" I heard a Kabyle say one day. The cultivation of the vine might well be carried on in certain districts. It has already been tried to a limited extent, and was found to succeed admirably. A native wine is made in some parts of Kabylie, which, though rough, is good and wholesome, bearing considerable analogy to a commoner species of Beaune.

If twenty such villages were established in the southern plains (which are rendered impossible for Europeans, on account of insalubrity), twenty-five thousand acres might be brought under cultivation within a period of four years; new habitations would arise, and new forests come into being; life would take the place of death, and agriculture would smile where now there is but a howling wilderness! In an administrative point of view these colonies would be of the utmost importance. The Kabyle is more to be depended upon than the Arab, while the simplicity and rectitude of the Kabyle form of government could be knitted more easily with French authority than the arbitrarily

despotic and ofttimes singularly immoral code of the Arab tribes. Looking at the matter from another point of view, it would be much to the advantage of Kabylie herself to draft off the exuberance of her population, preparing for the emigrants, at the same time, a real and substantial fortune, instead of a precarious and miserable future, with a prospect of hardship and starvation. The example given by the model villages could not but bear fruit. The Arab would learn from his fellow-native what he would never learn from a European. Between the Arab and the Frenchman are thirty-seven years of war—and Christianity.

In every society woman is one of the most powerful instruments of that progress of which she is the first to feel the effects, and the daily contact with the freeborn Kabyle woman would go far to raise the Arab wife from the degradation thrust upon her by Polygamy. From all this we are led to the conclusion that the native of Kabylie must be the link destined to unite the Arab aborigines with the benefits of modern civilization, although the ultimate result, in fact, would

be the substitution of the Kabyle for the Arab element.

Much has been said of the unwillingness of the Kabyles to quit their mountain homes, on the plea of the universal attachment of mountaineers to their native land. This argument is refuted by the fact of the oases of the Sahara being peopled by men of Kabyle descent, driven probably from their hearths by misery at home, and a hope of wealth elsewhere. Wherever they are met with, they are found to be a settled and industrious race, working hard and saving thriftily; rich men some of them, and prosperous nearly all. Those that I have mentioned above, who migrate annually southward in search of work, are naturally anxious, at the end of the season, to return homewards, for their families are left behind, and the Arabs, amongst whom they have been labouring, are little anxious to intermarry with those whom they look upon as servile workmen and vulgar peasants; but transplant these men in tribes or whole families, and see how different will be the result. Their household

gods—their Lares and Penates—will be grouped around them, and they will cease to have an interest in seeking their hills and dales far away. In reducing any theory whatever to practice, many difficulties are certain to arise. Such in this case would be the cost of the first installation of the native colonist in his new quarters. It is generally the poorer classes, away among the distant valleys, that come down and cultivate the rich soil of the plains, commencing as simple labourers, and ending sometimes as proprietors. It was in this manner that most of the little colonies already planted had their origin. The system of barter is carried on to a great extent, tools and implements being exchanged for corn, and often even lent throughout a season, on the understanding of payment following immediately on the harvest.

The Kabyles are the soul of honour, and are rendered by their overweening sense of their own superiority the slaves of their debts and of their word. I saw a Kabyle one day, who, finding his demand for a loan refused by a European,

cried out, "Do you take me for an Arab, that you refuse me your money?"

The premium of fifty francs, which it is proposed to bestow on every emigrant, would suffice to the frugal mountaineer for the erection of a hut, and he could easily obtain an advance from those at home while awaiting the advent of his crop. Thanks to his natural sobriety and love of toil, he would be in a position to pay off his encumbrances in a very few years, laying aside each year a portion of his harvest for that purpose. In the same ratio as his debts diminished, the income of the cultivator would increase, until in a short time he would be enabled to build himself a house of stones, and settle down as a rising farmer.

* "Il y a bien des années qu'un éminent général, M. Duvivier, écrivait: 'Il est de toute évidence que la fixité kabaïle et l'amour de cette race pour le travail devront être les plus forts pivots de notre politique, pour nous établir avec ordre, succès et stabilité en Afrique . . .' "—*Solution de la Question d'Algérie*, p. 1541. 184.

"M. le Sénateur de Forcade la Roquette s'exprime en ces termes au sujet des Kabyles:—'Le Kabyle, laborieux comme le paysan d'Europe, se livre avec intelligence à la culture. Il n'est pas nomade comme l'Arabe, il habite des villages aussi peuplés et aussi rapprochés que les villages

The Duke of Malakoff says in one of his despatches:—

"Tout nous commande de fixer en Algérie une population Européenne, nombreuse et forte, d'abord pour transformer le sol, ensuite pour le conserver. L'effectif de l'armée ne pourra pas toujours être maintenu à son chiffre actuel, il faut prévoir le jour où il aura diminué, et mettre dès lors nos établissements en état de se défendre eux-mêmes, aussi bien contre des attaques extérieures que contre des soulèvements intérieurs. Pour cela il n'est pas indifférent que la population Européenne soit placée au hasard, *il faut qu'elle occupe des points stratégiques*, les grandes voies de communication, et qu'elle s'y développe avec sécurité et liberté . . ."

Of course the theory that I have been laying down refers only to those portions of the Tell where such a project as that of the Duke's would be impossible, partly on account of climate, and

des Pyrénées. On PEUT ATTENDRE BEAUCOUP *de cette population*, moins éloignée de nous par son origine et ses mœurs, *et plus facile à assimiler que la population Arabe.*' "—*Rapport sur le Commerce et la Navigation de l'Algerie.*

partly from inaccessibility of position. In the districts of which I speak, European colonies would be impracticable, as the Kabyle can produce a crop twenty-three times cheaper in those localities than the European, whose wants, always greater than the frugal mountaineers', become exaggerated in this portion of Algeria; besides the probability of his eventually succumbing to fever and unaccustomed heat. The great stumbling-block, after all, exists not in the repugnance of the Kabyle to emigration, or in the difficulties of distance and of money, but in the great question of possession of the soil, and the power of expelling its present occupants. This question I have entered into more fully elsewhere.

When the Arabs shall be expelled and replaced by Europeans throughout the healthy portion of the Tell, and when the Kabyles shall occupy the more trying portions abutting on the Sahara, then there will be real hope for Algeria, and not till then. May the day be not far distant.

CHAPTER IV.

FORT NAPOLEON.

WE had secured mules to convey us to Fort Napoleon, the great stronghold of the French in Kabylie, and started off at daybreak, expecting great things in the way of scenery. Nor were we disappointed, for the path led through an ever-varying landscape, which we were fully prepared to appreciate after the dust and dazzle of Algiers. As there was no road, we followed the bed of a stream for some distance, until we came to a point where we were told by our guides to cross. The river was upwards of two hundred yards in width, and rushing rapidly in a very unpleasant-looking manner. However, there was nothing for it but to make the attempt. The mules rose to the occasion, fighting bravely

through it, although the water was above their girths and our feet. No wonder that the Kabyles have preserved their independence, when we realize that the streams with which their country is intersected render it quite impassable during certain seasons of the year. It certainly was an enchanting scene in the bright fresh light of morning. Not such a morning, though, as we have in our colder climes; they have such advantage over us in the South in sun and luxuriance of vegetation, that it is but fair that we should take precedence of them in dawn and twilight. It was very beautiful, nevertheless—rocky hills on either side of us, well wooded with cork and olives; groves of fig and almond, and such enormous masses of cactus as almost impeded our progress. The native gardens which lay around were nothing less than a perfect wilderness. It is not the custom to divide them by walks—so that olives and grape-vines grow together into thickets, whilst almonds and apples, plums and peaches, force a way for themselves wherever they find a little space. Figs are much cultivated in this dis-

trict, partly on account of facility of culture, and partly because the fruit is easily dried, and forms, with bread, a general article of daily food. In March the hills are a perfect fairy-land; the fields are covered with anemones and violets; daffodils perfume the evening breeze; the datura sways its long white bells, and loads the air with heavy scents; the gentle hum of many-coloured insects alone breaks the drowsy stillness as they sip the sweetness of the fruit-blossom, or light on the graceful candelabra of the aloe. The damp places are a sheet of gold and silver, while lavender grows in profusion from out the fissures of the rocks.

The olive will only thrive in certain privileged spots, of which the North of Italy and this country of "Grande Kabylie" are among the most favoured. It is stated* that there are upwards of twenty million olive-trees in Algeria, which produce about ninety million quarts of oil annually. The Kabyles pay much attention to this branch of arboriculture, carefully grafting their trees and

* L'Algérie, Essai Economique et Politique. By Duvernois.

pruning them at stated times and seasons. The wild, ungrafted olive is by no means inferior in quality to its more pampered companion, the essential difference lying in the greater amount of oil that is pressed out. The extraction of the oil is paid for by the abandonment of one-fifth of the quantity produced. Native mills are of so awkward a construction, that much oil is lost in the pressing, but that is of little consequence to them while the berries are so plentiful, and their cultivation so great a monopoly.

Our way led up steep bridle paths, and down tracks rendered slippery by recent rains. As we rose gradually into the hill-country, the air became sensibly colder and more bracing—so much so, that one could not but be astonished at the scanty draperies of the women that we passed. These consisted in some cases of nothing but a piece of cotton stuff, fastened on both shoulders with great silver pins, leaving the arms and a considerable portion of the bosom exposed to view. The face and breast are much tattooed; the head is enveloped in a gaudy handkerchief, and tied

about with many chains and ornaments. All this, with a huge pair of silver earrings and immense clanking bracelets and anklets, produces a very savage effect indeed, as the woman stands under an ancient olive or monstrous cactus, shading her eyes with her hand, the sunlight just tipping her metal decorations the while.

On nearing Fort Napoleon, we turned a sharp corner, and a magnificent view of mountain scenery spread before us—ranges of hills, undulating one behind the other, in all the endless delicate tones of grey and purple and green; rugged rocks, and woods, and cultivation. Little Arab villages were dotted here and there, occupying strong positions on the very summits of the hills, characteristic from their low red roofs, and pale, soft-toned cactus palisades. From the place on which we stood forty of these tiny towns could be distinguished, in some of which the doors and little strips of garden might easily be traced, whilst others were but as a spot of red on the far-off plains behind—a broad expanse of hill and dale, backed by the glorious range of snowy

Djerjura, cutting sharp into the sky. As we gazed, the sun began to set, and soon the vast valley before us faded into gloom, the topmost points and peaks just touched with rosy light; and then the heavens changed to pink, and then to gold, the eternal mountains softened to a hazy purply blue, and all was wrapped in sleep.

We passed the battle-field on which was decided the fate of the warlike Kabyles. Generals Yusuff and McMahon were led into the heart of the country by certain of the chiefs, who, for some reason of their own, preferred to abandon their position of independence for that of French pensioners. They say that the French would never have got a footing here at all, had not treachery been at work. The influence of General Yusuff went far, however, with the native chiefs; for he was a native like themselves, and had led an adventurous life. In his youth he was a galley-slave of the Bey of Tunis; he escaped, and entered the French service as interpreter and Spahi; was in course of time made sergeant, and ultimately rose to be a general of division. Last year he was

superseded for some mistake of which he had been guilty, and died lately in France of a broken heart.

Fort Napoleon is the great military establishment *par excellence* of Northern Algeria, and occupies a magnificent position, two thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea. General Randon laid the first stone in June, 1857; and the entire work, which covers an area of nearly thirty acres, was completed within five months of that date.

We wandered among its European houses, and mused over its battlements. We could just see in the extreme distance the abode of the tribe of Beni-Ouassef, which is composed chiefly of silversmiths, who enjoy the monopoly of the manufacture of Kabyle jewelry. Some of the specimens that I saw were really very good in design, though clumsy in workmanship, reminding me somewhat of the heavier kind of Etruscan ornament, of which M. Campana of Rome possessed such a fine collection. Nearly all the jewelry worn by the Kabyles, as well as by the Oulad Nayls of the desert, is

composed of silver, with the addition of a species of coarse enamel and great knobs of coral. Many of the brooches and pins bear the effigy of the Cross, as well as other Christian emblems, which may be accounted for by the fact that Christianity was once the religion of the race, established in full force by Constantine, and swept away on the irruption of the Arabs. The following lines are taken from the circular of the Bishop of Algiers—

"The Kabyles of the Djerjura, more especially round Fort Napoleon, offer the happiest disposition for a *complete return* to Christianity. One of the chiefs of the Sabao, having borrowed the Bible from the military chaplain, demanded to be baptized, whilst another even offered ground for the erection of a church. But it is not French policy to proselytize, so that those conversions that are made are purely spontaneous."

As we sat leaning over the walls of the fort we were joined by an old man who spoke excellent French, and was most communicative as to his past experiences in peace and war. He told us many things about the "interieur" of Kabyle life,

which only made me marvel all the more that such nobility of sentiment and altitude of moral tone should exist without the religion of our Lord. A picturesque old man he was, as he sat on a bit of rock relating to us his anecdotes and adventures, his weary old eyes wandering hazily over the landscape, and lighting suddenly into fire as he touched on some stirring reminiscence of days gone by. A fine old head, with flowing beard, and time-worn cheeks, shaded by the hood of his white burnous—a noble wreck of stalwart manhood. His broad back, though bowed by years, told tales of strength and mountain independence in "the days—the days—the days that are no more!" Amongst other things he related to us, with much garrulity and unnecessary waste of breath, the following story of Bou-Barla, the Kabyle hero of 1850, which I have endeavoured to compass within more reasonable limits:—

In 1850, a young man was seen to establish himself on the market-place of Aumale, where he pitched a miserable tent, and crouched on a ragged carpet, telling his beads, and chanting the psalmo-

dies of Islamism. The deep beatitude of this young man soon brought round him a straggling crowd of ruffians and ignorant bandits, all anxious to expiate their crimes by the purchase of some relic or mysterious amulet from the hand of the sainted wanderer. His reputation grew from Sunday to Sunday; and the weaker sex, always leaning to superstition, soon formed under his direction a numerous band of disciples. This worthy individual added to his other functions the speciality of giving children to sterile wives—a talent much sought after in a land where a woman without children is the despised of all. One unlucky Sunday, however, he was caught tripping by an inconveniently jealous husband, who carried him before the French authorities, and made him expiate his imprudence within the walls of the Aumale prison.

No one could tell whence came this man—whether he had been expelled from the ranks of the Spahis; or had sojourned in the bagne of Toulon; or spent his time on the islands of Sainte-Marguerite. This person was to play a great part

in the history of Algeria; but his moment had not yet come, and the chosen one of God contented himself with wandering from village to village, and from tribe to tribe, announcing the coming of the Mussulman Anti-Christ, and of an entirely new order of things. He traversed the fertile plains of the Arabs, and the tribes of the Djerjura, industriously disseminating discord wherever he put his foot, and eventually reached the all-powerful confederation of the Aïth-Abbes.

The Bureau-Arabe of Aumale, becoming aware of hidden plots and silently-working agitation, sent forth a decree for the arrest of the agitator. The Aïth-Abbes, however, refused to surrender their unbidden guest, according to the laws of hospitality so rigidly enforced by Kabyle tradition. The latter, foreseeing that nothing was to be obtained from tribes whose life was commerce, and who were too much occupied to think of sedition, made a virtue of necessity, and gracefully withdrew, betaking himself across the Oued-Sahel, to the territories of Mlikeuch, a poor and savage race, of whom the proverb says that "a Mlikchi

would sell his friend for a douro, his brother for two, and his father for three." These men were ripe for revolt, and the very clay to be moulded by such a one as our hero. From the moment of his arrival amongst them, the wanderer put on the aspect of an anchorite—prayed loudly many times a day, and, shutting himself up, resigned himself ostentatiously to fasting and meditation. A presentiment of the fall of Kabyle independence began to dawn on the public mind, alarmed by the repeated sorties of General Bugeaud and his lieutenants. Everywhere men talked of the great expedition that was to conquer Kabylie; and the natives could no longer ignore the fact of an approaching crisis.

The adventurer of the market-place of Aumale now resolved to rouse the spirit of independence amongst the mountaineers, and to associate with it the religious element, always to be dreaded in dealings with a wild and primitive people, even though they incline to be unbelievers. He announced to all that he was Si-Mohammed Ben Abd-Allah in person—otherwise, the looked-for

Anti-Christ, and took the surname of Bou-Barla, by which he was known through the stirring events which followed. He addressed himself to the national feelings of the people and their spirit of independence, veiling all he had to say, meanwhile, under a veil of religion and fanaticism. Striking such chords as these, he was bound to succeed, although the terrible paraphernalia of goblins and of mysticism in which he surrounded himself lost half their terrors when in contact with the matter-of-fact mountaineers. They pressed him one day with questions about money and powder, on which he replied—"What! O ye of little faith, will God deny aught to His elect, combating for their religion? Ye speak of money—I say unto you, that I have but to strike the earth, and it will pour forth in torrents." With these words, the self-made chérif stamped upon the ground, and raising the mat on which he stood, showed to the bewildered natives a hole filled with douros, or, rather, counterfeits, all silvered over. Miracles such as this touched the cupidity of his audience, and inflamed the enthusiasm of the most irresolute.

Bou-Barla now made a triumphal progress through the country, gathering together auxiliaries as he went, complimenting the strong and encouraging the weak. He struck the decisive blow in uniting himself to the powerful tribe of the Hidjeurs, and from that day may be dated his real power; he was no longer an obscure chief of partisans, but the recognized head of a political party. He appeared in great pomp on the market-place belonging to the Hidjeurs, with banners flying and music playing, and such a concourse of horses as raised public enthusiasm to the highest pitch. The Kabyles threw themselves before the holy chérif, who advanced and recited a solemn prayer, amid the deep silence of his auditory. It must have been a telling sight, amid these rocks, barely shaded by the sombre olive; these men in classic draperies, their feet bound round with the skins of beasts, discussing tumultuously, and shouting against oppression; the next moment bending silently, with bowed neck, and imploring the protection of an invisible Creator. All devoured the words of the chérif, and excitement was approach-

ing its climax, when a negro of repulsive features burst through the circle, precipitated himself upon the chérif, and crying to the crowd, "This man is not the chosen one of God!" discharged an immense bell-mouthed musket full at the chest of the chérif, who stood impassible, and moved not a step. The negro threw himself at his feet, contorting himself in fearful convulsions.

"Unbeliever!" murmured Bou-Barla, "to doubt my power. I pardon thee; but learn that I am invulnerable. In vain the balls strike my body, for I am sent from Heaven! Follow me, Kabyles, and obey me blindly, that I may lead you on to victory!"

The news of the appearance of the true chérif struck upon all that was poetical in the Kabyle nature, and the glad tidings spread like wildfire from mouth to mouth in the fastnesses of Djerjura, gaining in the telling, as may easily be imagined; filling the souls of all with sacred fire, and impelling them to hasten with offerings and gifts to prostrate themselves before the new deliverer. Money, and arms, and powder poured in on all

sides, many powerful and important tribes gave in their adhesion, and even the Marabouts, jealous as they proverbially are of infringements of their rights, joined in the general movement for the expulsion of the invader. The whole of Kabylie was in a flame from one end to the other; villages were burnt and homesteads destroyed, until the icy hand of winter spread its white mantle over the mountains, and hostilities were suspended for a time.

Early in the ensuing spring Bou-Barla took the field again, reinforced by the assistance, moral rather than physical, of Fathima, the celebrated druidess. He crossed to the north of the Djerjura, and attacked the important possessions of Si-Mohammed-Ben-Ali-Said, carrying off a booty of three hundred oxen and some thousands of sheep. He dared not attempt to place himself in the position of the above-mentioned chief, knowing full well that among the more educated populations his own intense ignorance would become but too apparent. He contented himself, therefore, with the advantages already gained, making one fruitless

attempt to capture the son of Ben Ali, that he might use him as a buckler in time of need against the attempts of disaffected tribes. Intoxicated with success, the chérif now conceived the idea of investing and sacking Bougie. He marched thither accordingly at the head of six thousand men, on the 13th of May, 1851, and received a check from Colonel de Wengy, which abated the zeal of his adherents, and undermined his reputation for invulnerability. During the retreat a pistol-shot passed through his burnous; upon which he quietly drew out a golden ball, remarking to his officers "that the unfaithful had abandoned iron and lead in their despair, and were now seeking to compass his destruction with gold."

On the 30th of October he was attacked near Dra-el-Mizane by General Pelissier, who drove him back upon the mountains in a series of brilliant engagements, burning and destroying all before him.

Beaten, but not vanquished, the chérif passed the river Ameraona, and again raised the standard of revolt in the neighbourhood of Bougie; but his

star had begun to pale on the horizon, and fortune smiled on Bou-Barla no more. From this moment it was a long series of defeats and repulses; and matters were brought to a crisis by the unexpected defection of many of his most powerful adherents. He now was forced to change his part, becoming the instrument of the passions and the hatred of those who had formerly been his puppets; for his recent reverses, and a wound that he had received, cast grave doubts upon his heavenly mission; and after a year of petty squabbling and insignificant engagements, he retired to the distant mountains of the lofty Djerjura, from which he was ejected by the very people who had kissed his feet only three short years before. He was killed on the 26th December, in a midnight fray, by a Kaid whom he had injured; and his head, his horse, and his arms were exhibited in all the principal market-places in the country, in order to convince the suspicious population that the once brilliant chérif was dead indeed.

At dinner we found a party assembled, embrac-

ing both the military and the commercial element. This, of course, resulted in a violent discussion upon the great subject of the government of the country. This is a subject upon which all mixed society in Algeria is sure to split, as the soldiers are for military government—a continuation of the avowedly bad system which is still carried on; whilst the colonists would gladly have some sort of imitation of that which is pursued in the mother country, with an introduction of communes and departments, mayors and civic authorities; such institutions, in fact, as should protect them from the one-sided and baleful influence of the Bureaux Arabes, whose sole business (say the discontented Europeans) is "to uphold the rights of the aborigines, at the expense of those who have abandoned home and country to improve the wastes of Africa."

The true cause of maladminstration is the placing of the reins of government and the command of the troops in the same hands.

Since 1830 every Governor has been a General or Marshal of France, holding at the same time

the office of Commander-in-chief of the army. In the long list that rises up before us, all arrived with the intention of introducing a new era of prosperity; and all, without exception, retired from office, leaving traces behind them of blunder and mistake. It is little wonder that they should go to pieces on such a rock as the accumulation of functions committed to their care.

The government of Algeria—of two nations, Arabs and Kabyles, with neither blood nor feelings in common—with the complication of a new race and a new civilization to introduce, is a work so complex as almost to defy the sagacity of the most enlightened diplomatists; and the situation is rendered one of still greater difficulty by the necessity of gaining the approbation of both natives and colonists in Algeria, as well as of public opinion in the mother country. It is not surprising that where the command of the army offers such attractions for the soldier, the arid functions of government and administration should be confided to delegates. It is this irresponsible oligarchy of subalterns, unchecked as it is by their superiors in office, that has

ever been working evil, and which calls for most immediate reform.

"The government of Algeria is placed between two contrary systems: the one tends towards the expansion of European colonization, the other would defend the sacred rights of the Aborigines; and these two systems occupy themselves with carrying on a civil war instead of uniting for the public good." *

In order to "regenerate and confound Algeria with France," † a system must be introduced more precise in administration, in social as well as in political economy, than is at present possible, whilst such a burden of responsibility rests on a single pair of shoulders.

The Army governs nine-tenths of Algeria by means of an institution called *Bureaux Arabes*. The Bureaux Arabes consist of little bands of officers sprinkled in threes and fours throughout the country, for the purpose of its *proper* legislation (?). These officers, one hundred and fifty in

* Emperor's speech on landing at Algiers.
† Ibid.

number altogether, unite under their administration all the functions which in the mother-country devolve on the maturest heads in France—religion, justice, public health and public instruction, prisons and public works, agriculture and commerce. But that which is in a groove, and consequently very simple in France, becomes a very labyrinth of Gordian knots in Algeria.

As regards religion, for instance, the officers of the Bureaux Arabes have the surveillance of the mosques and religious confraternities; all of which require to be watched narrowly, lest, under a pretext of devotion, fanatics should unite, either for purposes of conspiracy or the preaching of a holy war.

As regards justice, they have to be assured that the Kadis, or indigenous exponents of the law, give their judgments according to edicts prescribed by Government, which edicts are considered by many of them to be most unnecessary complications.

The task of regulating public instruction is no easy one. In order to regenerate a country by

education, it is necessary to be provided with books and with masters. The former do not exist at all; the latter are still very rare indeed.

The culminating point of difficulty, however, lies in the administration of the taxes, which is always complicated by reclamations and complaints from the dull-brained natives.

When we realise to ourselves that these labours of Hercules are in the hands of captains and sub-lieutenants, who leave their regiments only for a short time, and in whose career diplomacy forms no part, we can imagine the manner in which the work is done. If five hundred of the cleverest heads of France could receive, by miracle, youth, and a knowledge of the Arab tongue, as well as the complete science of Mussulman administration, these exceptional individuals would scarcely be sufficient for the unravelling of the questions which are daily laid before these young men; who, most of them, have never studied the questions at all, and trust to their native sagacity to save them from frequent dilemma.

It may be argued that in all posts of importance

there is a "commandant-superieur." This is true; but he is often absent, and the settling of all questions in his absence naturally devolves on the above-mentioned sub-lieutenants. Moreover, this "commandant-superieur" is nearly always an officer of middle age, who never remains at his post long enough to learn his business, being generally too glad to escape the harassing worry of an impossible position, by a speedy return to the bosom of his regiment.

Thus, in a country under civilized legislation, there exists a population of nearly three million souls, who are judged without a tribunal by captains and lieutenants, who administer justice without knowing the laws, and go back whence they came just as they are beginning to learn a little experience! What is necessary, therefore, is a complete change of system—a regular organization of administrative and judicial service, instead of the necessarily imperfect legislation of a military governor; and until this is done, we need not expect to see Algeria a flourishing colony or a prosperous state.

While on the subject of government I hope I may be pardoned for taking a cursory glance at a very dry subject, namely, that of Mussulman law.

It has two distinctly different faces; the one terrible and inexorable, the other indulgent and accommodating. The first, which is represented by the Koran, smells of the prison and the scaffold; the second, interpreted by Sidi-Abd-el-Rhaman, proclaims the legality of fines, and states that money will purchase immunity from every fault. It is curious that almost all the terrible denunciations of the Koran apply more especially to faults which our laws do not touch upon, as they are supposed to be judged by the human conscience—such, for instance, as breaking established fasts and the use of alcoholic drinks.

The doctors of the law who followed the epoch of proselytism, and of that original purity which belongs to great convictions, felt that it would be impossible for the Arab to exist under so severe a code of moral discipline. It was then that they subjoined those concessions to necessity which

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have altered the whole tenor of judicial principle. It is unfortunate that such should be the case, for these concessions, forced out by erring human nature, have only prolonged the existence of a law whose literal application was impossible. A revolting injustice naturally lasts a shorter time than an ordinary one. If the system of Mussulman law had remained inflexible, it would long ago have given way, and the people under its iron rod would have taken a different direction. The following extract will show that one word from Abd-el-Rhaman sweeps away the inexorable fabric, and leaves behind it another law, gifted with astonishing flexibility :—

"The chief should regulate the acts of the Kadis, for they are the pillars of his Government; and the Kadi is but the substitute of the chief by whom he has been named. Neither the partition of booty, nor the promulgation of laws, nor the payment of troops, nor the condemnation of murderers, shall be gone through by the Kadi, or any one else, without the orders of the chief himself, who shall look after the fines and settle

their amount according to established rule." *

One of the most horrible features in the law is its treatment of women. With the Arab a woman is no longer the sister who is formed, by religious tradition, from man's side, to point out the intimate bonds which unite her to him; she is nothing but the servant of the tent, the sad instrument of her master's pleasures, or the slave of his caprice; she is no more than the beast of burden, whose value varies with its beauty. The Arab says of a man who has lost his wife—"What a misfortune!—she was at least worth a hundred douros;" or else, "No matter, the deceased is a loss of ten."

Polygamy, covering as it does the most hideous immorality under the legal mantle, and giving constant food to jealousy and hatred, makes the tent a very hell. The stick is the only means employed by the lord and husband to reduce the atmosphere of his home to the temperate from the boiling point. It would be dreadful to relate all that is inflicted by Arab brutality upon the sex

* "L'Esprit de la Législation Mussulmane." Par Richard.

which is adorned by a Joan of Arc and a Jacqueline of Hainault. There was a man not long ago who was invested with the burnous of authority, and yet this man had cut off his wife's nose in a fit of jealousy!

One of the most venerated Mussulman divines thus writes in his commentary on the Koran:—"If a wife disobeys her husband, he shall put her in Coventry; on a repetition of the offence, he shall *beat her with something broad and soft, or with a stick, according as the law directs.*" And against this state of things she has no remedy. No wonder that the Arab woman sinks into brutish degradation!

CHAPTER V.

FORT NAPOLEON TO CONSTANTINE.

ON our appearance in the morning, we found letters of recommendation to help us on our way, and a variety of mules, which were to go with us a three days' journey to Bougie. Of course we did not get off till more than an hour after the time specified, as the knowledge of the value of time appears to be a gift forgotten by bounteous Nature in her creation of the African native. We eventually discovered, by bitter experience, that it was utterly useless to specify any particular hour in a rendezvous with an Arab. The only plan is to say "daybreak;" and even then mistakes occur, as the exact moment of daybreak is not too easy to determine. I thought that our cavalcade was unnecessarily large, consisting of

eight Arabs to look after five mules; but it was no use objecting, and we were fain to submit. One of them had been a Turko at the camp of Chalons, and was proud, in proportion, of his travelled experience and broken French. He was a fine, stalwart fellow, with broad shoulders and dark skin, and legs that would have done honour to a bronze statue, so fine they were in colour and symmetrical in form. He beguiled the tedium of the way by singing Arab songs, joined in chorus at intervals by the rest of the troupe—queer, monotonous chants, chiefly on one note, with many cranks, and twists, and turns—lugubrious and doleful music, seemingly with no beginning or end, sung with a harsh nasal intonation. It began by amusing me, but gradually I got bored with it, and ere it was over, could have screamed aloud, so much did it set my teeth on edge and strike upon the nerves.

The country through which we passed was inexpressibly wild and grand; bald precipitous rocks and yawning ravines, with no vegetation but stunted clumps of wild myrtle; melancholy wastes,

fit home of lion and of panther, sad in their simplicity, impressive in their solitude. The path was sometimes cut out of the rock, and sometimes a scarcely perceptible track across a barren space. We wound among the hills, peering at one moment down into an abyss below, clambering at another up some steep and slippery ascent, where our beasts found difficulty in keeping their feet. About midday we came upon a very characteristic village, approached by a gigantic avenue of cactuses, that stretched over our heads on either side of the way. It consisted of a large uneven space of open ground, its grass and herbage long since swept away by the patter of many feet. In the centre rose two enormous oaks, under whose gnarled branches sat a group of white-robed Kabyles. An encampment of lightly-constructed bamboo huts, through the walls of which daylight was plainly visible, was massed around. Each hut had its own little garden, choked with luxuriant fig and vine, from behind the boughs and leaves of which we could distinguish peeping heads and inquiring eyes. A woman was standing clear out

against the sky, rich in long black hair and silver ornaments, her well turned arm supporting a water-pot that rested on her head. Very curious is the pottery of these people; it is of coarse, rough manufacture, generally painted yellow and blue, which gives it a striking resemblance to our much-valued Majolica. It is a speciality of the tribes of Dellis, on the sea-coast. Many industries are exclusively practised by one tribe, and by them are sent all through the country. Such monopolies are the straw-hats of Oran and the carpets of the West, the tobacco of the Ismaëls and the soap of the Ben-Ourlis; though why this should be, and how the monopolies originated, it is impossible to say. One native, less startled by our sudden appearance than the rest, offered us figs and oranges, which were most refreshing in the intense heat of the midday sun.

I was beginning to suffer considerably from a first acquaintance with an Arab saddle; it is a wide, shapeless, thickly-padded affair, without stirrups (more like the pads used in circuses for posture-riding than anything else); the consequence of

which is, that the moment the mule begins his terribly rough canter, it requires all the talent of a Blondin to retain one's equilibrium. I had brought my own saddle, indeed, but there is always a difficulty about the use of it, as the native, who walks the journey as long as the traveller rides the mule, is far too lazy to go afoot on the return as well, and cannot mount the beast without some sort of covering to render less perceptible the peaks and ridges of its most uneven back.

As we travelled on, and consequently gained experience, we found ourselves obliged to increase the procession by one, engaging an extra mule to carry the Arab saddles, in addition to the one that bore the baggage. Many a time did I grudge the animal on which our "thorn" sat lolling—most useless of men—looking like a very old woman, rolled, as he always was, in heat as well as cold, in several burnouses, the hood coming like a great poke-bonnet well over his spectacled nose, and his great foolish feet flapping on each side of the mule's neck, like the padded legs of some foreign Guy Fawkes.

At dusk we reached a miserable village, perched on the top of a mamelon, where we were told we were to sleep, as the road is too dangerous to be pursued after nightfall, partly from the natural difficulties of the ground, and partly from the proximity of wild beasts. All day we had seen but little of paths; our way lay chiefly in the ascent of precipitous watercourses, which are dry just now, though the huge stones that impeded our progress attest the magnitude of the torrents when they *do* come—about February—at which period the country is impassable.

One of the crying wants of Algeria is a more effective road communication. In many of the districts through which we passed there were no roads, or attempts at roads, whatever. A country can never be freed from danger until it is possible to pass through it at any time or season of the year. So long as the routes are bad, it will be necessary to keep up an effective military force. Much is annually said in the French Parliament about the reduction of the army of occupation, but this will be quite impossible until the organi-

zation of proper methods of communication. Agriculture cannot flourish while things are in this state. It is not sufficient to sow, and reap, and gather into barns; there must be some outlet for the exportation of the superabundance of local produce. As there is no navigable river in Algeria, the whole weight of traffic must inevitably fall upon the roads, and consequently it is eminently necessary that they should, in the first place, exist.

"At the present rate at which they are worked," says General Chabaud-Latour, "it will take one hundred and fifty years to complete the lines of roads drawn out." The same gentleman states, in one of his annual reports, that farmers now pay £12 more for every horse-load sent from Orleansville to Tenés than they would do were the route completed.

We looked up with feelings of misgiving at the little village on the hill above us, and turned our faces towards it in grave doubt and uncertainty. A singular path led up to it—a series of rough steps hewn in the solid rock, with monster blocks

overhanging the way, as though they would gladly fall and crush us; brambles and cactus swinging in our faces, and tufts of rank herbage springing from between the stones. At the summit of the hill stood the oddest conglomeration of houses, or rather little low huts, seemingly jumbled one on the top of the other, and formed in a few cases by placing a loose thatch over a fissure formed by two adjacent walls of rock. It was literally impossible to move a step without having to mount on one block of stone, or slipping between two other ones. The sun was going down as I remarked all this, and certainly things had a peculiarly wild appearance; the extraordinary buildings grouped around, smoke issuing from out their doorways, and goats and chickens leaping from point to point; a dim vista of darkling woods and stretching plains and hills, just caught now and again between the overhanging boughs and shrubs. At the fountain, in the midst of this medley of hovels, we were received with much ceremony by the Sheikh, a dirty, squalid, filthy old man, who set apart a hut for the reception of

our party, and fetched with his own hands the wood necessary to make a fire. He ordered food to be laid before us, and stationed a guard of three of his men to protect us during the night. Thanking him for his hospitality, we entered our abode, and found it a wretched place enough—a long, low room, with many holes in its roof (luckily there was no rain), and a cold wind whistling through it in every direction. All kinds of vermin swarmed on the dank earthen floor, though we soon ceased seeing them, on account of the smoke, which found no outlet but the doorway. There was no *door*. We sat on rugs round the wood fire, and surveyed the scene—a weird and supernatural-looking spectacle. The inhabitants of the place had flocked in on hearing of our arrival, and squatted round the wood fire staring at us, their wild features harmonizing with their wild garb, the firelight flickering on their faces, and distorting them into every variety of evil passion inherent in the human breast. There was anger, there was hatred, contempt, horror, and remorse, flitting and chasing each other by

turns over those swarthy countenances, the effect only of the uncertain light, for the real expression spread over them all was one of curiosity mingled with astonishment.

For a time all was silence; the groups of dark-eyed children sitting in the front were drinking in the peculiarities of the white man; the crowds of men, who occupied an outer circle, were staring at us open-mouthed—while the indistinct mass of human nature that loomed behind, mixing with the long black shadows on the wall, were intently busy doing the same thing. Men and children, walls and rafters, were wrapt in a ruddy glow, whilst a background of snowy hills, and cold silver moonlight, glinted through the doorway. They gave us Arab bread and eggs, the bread really delicious; a sort of hot "fadgy," brown cake made with much butter. We were told not to eat too much, as "koos-koos," the *pièce de resistance* of Arab fare, was to be forthcoming immediately. To beguile the time of weary waiting, one of our guides told the following story to the group of attentive listeners seated round the embers:—

"Know, O children of the faithful, that from the coast of Cherchell may be seen a rock, shining black against the foaming sea, which bears the title of the 'Lovers' Island.'

"On a bronzed hillside, from which is visible the continent of Atlas, visionary as a dream, seeming to support on its peaks the starry vault, stands a small white house, dear to the sons of the Prophet. This house belonged to the aged Ben Youssef, a pious veteran, who delighted the souls of God and men by his great beneficence and numberless acts of charity. The orphan and the widow knelt at his gate, and never departed empty-handed. One night a sickly child lay on his threshold imploring succour and beseeching aid, his dying eyes resting on the good old man. Youssef's heart yearned towards him, on account of his resemblance to a dearly loved son, who was no more; and he straightway took up the starving boy, administered to his wants, and clothed him in the striped gondoura of heirship, adopting him as his own. Time rolled slowly on, and the gaunt lad with sunken eyes grew into a tall young man, handsome and

well-favoured. There was nought to ruffle his tranquil life. Every morning he led out the flocks to the fountain, and every night he brought them home again, certain of the caresses of the household who adored him, and of, at least, a smile from the lovely Zahra, the fair-faced daughter of the chief. Those limpid eyes looked long upon Hamed, and the end of it was—she loved.

"Now the aged Ben Youssef, mindful of the laws ordained by the Prophet, took his daughter, and, investing her with the mantle of womanhood, bade her retire from the eyes of men to that chaste solitude in which the Arab maiden lives until she passes from her father's home to the new duties of a wife. No more pleasant dallyings for her; no more delicious evenings spent under the spreading olive, listening to the music of Ben Hamed's voice. For her these days were over, never to return! A cloud, too, had come over the young man's life. He wandered listlessly among the flowers, and murmured his complaints through a reed which his deft fingers had taught to speak. He ceased to love his flock, or to see beauty on the face of

nature—his sheep strayed where they listed, and he followed them home at sunset, growing more pensive day by day. The Chérif watched him with anxious brow, and laying his thin hand upon the stalwart arm, said,

"'Boy Hamed, what secret grief makes winter of thy spring?'

"'Are all men happy here below?' sighed the other.

"'No, my son, alas! it is God's will that whatever our station we are troubled with regrets. But there should be nothing to ruffle thy young brow; youth should sing and dance. No evil Djinn is following in thy track?'

"'The skiff is often swamped when close to shore.'

"'But when the lark returns to her nest, 'tis not with sighing like the owl.'

"'Father, I am like a withered sapling since Zahra has hid her face.'

"On this it was the old man's turn to sigh and shake his head.

"'Alas! she is promised to Khlill, sheikh of the

Medidja; I promised her to him long years ago. Had it been otherwise, I would gladly have found a long-lost son on the bosom of my daughter, but Allah has not willed it so. God, adored by shadows of morn and eve,* has spun our destiny, blessed be His name! Let us then, like the shadows, look up to Him without despair, and worship the decrees of His supreme goodness.'

"Hamed, on hearing these words, seemed changed to marble, while freezing cold settled on his heart. Motionless he stood, till his agony found vent in a feeble groan—he turned, and fled into the night.

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"A strange and unaccustomed sight startled the birds from their nests and the beasts from their lair. Behold! a squadron of armed men galloping hither and thither across the plains, enveloped in a fiery cloud, from out of which glitters the shimmer of steel. They must have travelled long, these dark-browed soldiers; their costume tells of

* "Everything in heaven and earth renders homage to God. The shadow of the morning and the shadow of the evening adore him."—(*The Koran: division entitled "Thunder;" verse* 16.)

the south, and the bloody flanks of their steeds betoken a journey from afar. The air is rent with shouting—locusts cower in the grass—and the peace of the valley is no more, for from out the midst of dust appears a brilliant *cortége*, well appointed, horse succeeding horse, and warrior coming after warrior—the chief appearing in his pomp to claim the daughter of Youssef.

"He came—the old chief, grey-bearded—to remind the Chérif of his promise, and exact the fulfilment of his word. He came, surrounded by a gorgeous panoply of vassals and of horses, to bear away his wife, the ox-eyed Zahra, pride of the Kabyles.

"A sense of imminent danger roused Hamed from his apathy.

"'What!' he thought, 'is it indeed to-morrow that my beloved will pass into the hands of yon old man? He has never seen her, so cannot love her, whilst she—— As for Youssef, he sighs over his daughter's fate, and reproaches himself for the careless vow of long ago. It is I, and I alone, who can extricate him from the difficulty;

it is my hand that must save us all. I will seek my darling, and bear her out of danger. Quick, then, to the task! If I show not energy to-night, all will be lost to-morrow!'

* * * * * * *

"The fruit to which Zephyr whispered in the month of May, 'Quit thy branch,' was no more than the heart of a frail white flower when it answered to the wind's low sighings, 'I cannot yet.' In July it had swelled into a goodly form, but still it shook its head to the morning breeze, murmuring 'Not yet—not yet,' smiling the while in the dancing beams of day. But in August the fit moment had arrived, and the round ripe apple gave way to the first effort of the amorous wind. So did the tender Zahra in a parallel moment abandon herself to the arms of her lover.

"But which way would be best for this hasty flight? Should they make for the fastnesses of the far-off Djerjura, where precipices yawn and crevasses gape? Pursuit would certainly be slow out there, but the danger would be equally great for them and their pursuers. The plains were

rendered impassable by the numbers of the festive host. There was nothing for it then but the sea, which spread before them its measureless expanse, nursing on its bosom a tiny skiff, and plashing softly on the pebbles like the purring of a cat. As they put forth on the deceitful waters, they sent up to Heaven a plaintive prayer:

"'O God! protect our flight across these waves wrapped in obscurity. Any shore will be one of hope for us. Even were we to become the slaves of the Christians, such a fate would be better, side by side, than free and separate for ever!'

"The night was black, and all on shore were sleeping, as they sped onward through darkness infinite—not an eye to watch them on earth, not a star to look on them from heaven. Onward, always onward, over unfathomed depths, the water singing softly to them as they fled; till suddenly a shock, a crash, and the lovers were struggling with the rushing billows. With one arm Hamed clasped his Zahra to his breast, with the other he clung convulsively to the cold rock, which had

blasted their hopes for ever. Stern, black, slippery stone, hard as the hearts of Christian dogs, implacable as death to the young and happy! With a supreme effort he landed the maiden on the strand, bending over her pale white form, and cursing cruel destiny. As he gazed, the dreadful thought arose in his breast that to-morrow they would be taken, and Zahra would be stoned—Zahra, his beloved, would perish by a cruel death! In despair he turned to the horizon, and as the orange shows its yellow globe mid darkling foliage, so rose the moon with golden disc, making a silver road through the silent waters, which led from the islet right up to heaven. This, then, was the threshold of Eternity. It was this fate—a short sleep in the mysterious silence of the deep black sea—which was to open for them the gates of gardens beyond, where, in palaces of alabaster, and by murmuring streams, they should live and love for ever.

"'Sit down, O my darling, on the slime-covered rock—sit down and look on your nuptial bed. One last effort, one short struggle, and pain,

and grief, and sorrow, and suffering will exist for us no more!'

"Imperceptibly there arose a soft breeze, and a purple tint pervaded the grey sky. Soon the horizon was bathed in splendour, and a gentle zephyr kissed their cheeks, announcing to the lovers the dawn of a new day—a day that was for them the last on earth.

"Silently they rose up and stood on a rocky peak. The crowd that was assembled on the opposite bank discovered them, and straightway fifty barks shot from the distant shore. Then Hamed pressed his darling to his breast, and with one long last kiss that drew their souls together, they plunged into the surging tide. A great cry burst from the avengers who approached; but the lovers were seen no more."

Getting tired, at length, of waiting, and of being stared at, we rolled ourselves in our wraps, and had just sunk into a comfortable sleep, when we were aroused to partake of a savoury dish of koos-koos. A very savage proceeding truly! A large pan

was placed in the midst, from which all were to eat indiscriminately with wooden spoons. The dish consists of half-ground barley, mixed with raisins, onions, honey, and hard-boiled eggs. On it lay lumps of mangled fowl, which we were expected to tear with our fingers. This sounds rather nasty, but when well made koos-koos is really very good and wholesome. Its manufacture is the exclusive work of the women, who sprinkle flour little by little on a board, and by the help of water roll it with their hands into a multitude of little pills. This is, as may be imagined, a tedious job. After this it is steamed in a pipkin over a species of sieve, the meat that forms the gravy being boiled in the same pot, whilst the edges of it are hermetically sealed with clay, in order that all the steam shall be sure to pass through the upper layer of little pills; to all this is added the red pepper of the country, and such spices as may be deemed necessary.

The poorer classes live on "black" koos-koos, which takes its sombre hue from the hands of its makers, and is a commoner species of the same

article. There are no such things as *starving* natives in the country districts, hospitality being so highly considered that the hungry wretch has but to sit down in the first tent he comes to, to be fed with whatever the proprietor may be eating at the time.

Having done justice to our repast, we again addressed ourselves to sleep; no easy task, as our Arab guides told stories all through the night, and shouted with laughter periodically. Neither was it pleasant to feel the fleas running over one in packs—which they did. Under these circumstances, we were not sorry to be roused from uneasy slumbers by the hitherto snoring "thorn," and told to make ready for departure. It was still dark, but a distant streak in the heavens gave token of approaching dawn. I got up, bitten to pieces, with the satisfaction of knowing that I carried my persecutors with me, and with an awful pain in my back from contact with mother earth, and found myself jogging on again. The variety of scenery in this country is really wonderful. Yesterday, ravines and stony beds of torrents,

the snowy Djerjura rising up behind; to-day a pretty wood of cork-trees, with a high undergrowth of some delicate species of heath. At ten o'clock we reached a Marabout convent, to the Superior of which we carried letters. He came forward—a fine man of forty-six or forty-seven—dignified and kingly in the extreme, clad in right royal robes of snowy white. He read his letters and shook us by the hand, motioning us to dismount; gave his orders, and retired.

Carpets and cushions were soon spread under a great oak. On these carpets we lay, contemplating the lovely Djerjura, and had thus to endure the staring of the natives for about an hour and a half. This vexatious ordeal passed through, the great man re-appeared, followed by an attendant bearing coffee, and his little son, a child of seven years old, to whom we were duly presented. They made a great deal of us, as we were told that only five Europeans had passed that way during the entire life-time of the chief.

The inevitable "koos-koos" of course followed the coffee; after which my watch and knife and

pistol all had to be handed round for inspection. In course of time we managed to escape, after giving presents to the little boy. I gave him my whip, the whistle at the end of which delighted him much. The chief sent a relation of his own on horseback to guide us through the forest of Jaontine-Jarn, and led us out of the vicinity of the convent in person, all his family and attendants following in procession. Arrived at a turn in the path, he took a cordial farewell of us, bidding us God-speed; and passing onward on our journey, we saw his face no more.

A ride of two or three hours brought us to the outskirts of the great forest, which covers the whole of a high mountain; and here the aspect of things changed once more. Fine woods of oak and olive—monsters indeed!—gnarled and knotted ancients, like the hoary veterans of our English parks, their seam-ploughed rinds and emerald moss contrasting well with the heavy snow that lay in tracts upon the ground. From one spot we looked into the calm sea, sleeping some five thousand feet below; whilst on the

other side of us we caught a glimpse of distant Bougie, with its bay and fringe of hills.

This district was, until quite lately, rendered impassable, by the hordes of banditti that infested its woods, and is still by no means safe, as "Kabylie Orientale" is at most a half-conquered country, and its inhabitants are lawless in the extreme. We passed several groups of peasants, who looked as though they could cut our throats with pleasure, but dared not risk the experiment in the face of our greater numbers.

The Marabout guide, who was sent with us by his chief, turned out a dreadful old lunatic. He began by saying that war was his pet particular trade, and flourished a murderous-looking knife, some two feet long, in our faces, in a most uncomfortable manner!

The disagreeable thought would rise that here were we, three men, in the hands of eleven half savage natives, in the midst of a snow-clad forest, infested with wild beasts, of which forest we knew not a yard of the way. Supposing that they were to take it into their wicked heads to make

mincemeat of us, what could we do? Our revolvers kept them somewhat in awe, as they were only armed with knives, the French conquerors having put a wise restriction on the sale of powder. At one time our lunatic Marabout would vanish from sight, and re-appear suddenly a little farther on with a wild war-shriek, his white drapery and close-shaved head conspicuous in their weirdness, and suddenly stooping on one knee, pretend to fire at us with his stick, intimating thereby that murder was a delightfully exhilarating amusement, and specially adapted to his then frame of mind. We saw tracks in the snow of wolves and panthers, and bits of wild-boar hair torn out in a conflict.

After our long day's march, we were not sorry to discern in the distance, about sunset, the blank square walls of a caravanserai. They are all built after the same plan, and consist of a great courtyard, surrounded on all sides by rooms and outhouses one story high, both doors and windows facing inwards for protection and general safety. This absence of windows gives a blank look to the

outer walls of the building, which, with the huge folding-doors, all studded with iron, makes the whole thing look exceedingly like a prison. We installed ourselves in a bare, empty apartment, which we proceeded to endow with a habitable aspect, by means of a good fire and a heap of straw for bedding. The use of my rather heavy baggage now became apparent. Much to the surprise of my companions, I produced in turn a large India-rubber sheet, an air-pillow, candles, and an Etna—things undreamed of in their more untravelled philosophy! My camp-stool made a capital table, and our various bags did duty for chairs. We gathered round the fire, and I translated extracts from the French guide-book, whilst the doctor made himself useful to society by brewing some "Liebig" soup. This and a little Arab bread staved off the effects of hunger, and my Scotch friend and I now proposed a stroll to look at the mountains by moonlight, which vagary was speedily nipped in the bud. No one is allowed outside the walls after dark, as the lions have an awkward way of prowling close under the

gates of the building, in quest of the sheep within its enclosures.

The hills, as we approached the place, were really grand, rising tier above tier in every shade of purply blue, with an irregular rocky pile of snowy caps beyond. This is a different range from that of the Djerjura—more sharp and peculiar in outline, though nothing could excel the beauty of the latter as seen from Fort Napoleon.

Another uneasy night, in consequence of our always attendant "wild beasts," caused us to spring up with alacrity at the first intimation of daylight. We were told that by starting early we should easily reach Bougie in time for breakfast, but, alas! we have learnt to distrust Arab ideas of time. We started, then, without food, and travelled on gaily enough for several hours downwards from the hills towards the great plains that lead gradually to the sea. We passed through a much-infested wood, and several sombre black ravines, that are said to swarm with lions and the smaller fry of carniverous nature. There is little danger from them, however, in daylight, though

we were forced to keep our band together as a precaution against surprise.

We soon left the lovely mountains, and began to pursue a series of straight and dreary roads—very dusty and very white—whose uninviting appearance left us ample space to think seriously of breakfast. The way seemed to become longer and more straight by dint of looking at it, and each turn brought its own horror in the shape of another stretch still longer than the last. Thus we progressed for nine mortal weary hours, almost overcome with heat and thirst and want of food. By the time that Bougie really came in sight, I was quite beyond any feeling of joy or satisfaction, although the approach to it is exceedingly pretty.

It is a small sea-side town, once great, in the days of piracy and Pedro of Arragon; but now its glory has departed. It lies in a gulf, which caused it to be the capital of a kingdom in Roman times, and has ever been a post of such importance, that it has passed through many hands. This accounts for the variety of remains discover-

ed within its precincts—Turkish and Arab, Roman and Spanish. Strange to say, it possesses no port, on account of the shallowness of the adjacent waters. A very small amount of trouble would, however, easily obviate this difficulty.

"It is one of the most important markets of the North, doing business in oil alone to the extent of three million francs per annum. The Europeans possess 65 mills, and the natives 1,500. It may interest the followers of Bishop Trench to know that this town gave its name to the French candle "bougie," from their being made originally from wax bought in the neighbourhood. The hotel-people were much surprised at our having penetrated through the unsafe portion of Kabylie Orientale, as the common route for travellers is along the seashore. They could not understand that we wished to see people in their pristine state, not in a Frenchified condition. Bougie would be a pleasant place of rest for anyone temporarily tired of the world. It is the acme of peace and quietness, and possesses lovely walks by the sea, and amongst the luxurious vegetation of its shores. It

is enough to soothe a ruffled spirit only to stand by the water's brink, and look down—down—into the clear green depths, and watch the weeds just gently wafted to and fro by the sleepy motion of the pleasant sea.

In the evening there was a most exquisite effect of sunset. The range of mountains that enclose the gulf stood gaunt in crag and peak against the sky, which gradated from a delicate green to a deep smalt blue. On this ground was inlaid a series of great clouds that changed prismatically—from violet to rose-colour, red, and then a golden orange of intensely tropical gorgeousness of colour. A few fleecy white scirri added to the general intensity by contrast, and a pale young crescent moon gave token of the departure of the sun. The sea was deep blood-red, reflected from the clouds, while on the other side of the heavens lay heavy masses of tumuli, almost kissing the snowy tops, behind which sank the sun in a glory of gold and orange and carmine. Below the black hills the eye was carried away by shadowy olive-woods —cool grey and green, relieved here and there by

a rich orange-plantation, or the delicate-toned straggling foliage of the cactus.

The road from Bougie to Sétif leaves the plain and winds for five or six miles along the cliffs, two hundred feet above the sea, and from the turning-point of the way the view is magnificent. The little town of Bougie, on its promontory, crowned by its little fort, in the dim distance; ranges and ranges of mountains stretching one behind the other, and the deep blue Mediterranean uniting vaguely with the sky. We halted for luncheon in a heathery glen, and, mounting higher and higher, crossed the watershed, and found an entirely new scene awaiting us. So great was our satisfaction at this surprise, that we dismounted from our beasts, and placing ourselves on a ledge of rock that commanded the whole expanse, prepared for a quiet smoke, although the mule-drivers scowled their displeasure at us, not at all appreciating our love of the picturesque. A grand vale lay spread before us, enclosed by percipitous and rocky mountains, whose feet were clothed with every variety of foliage, from the

cork-tree to the olive, from the myrtle to the orange. The sun was sinking in the heavens, and threw the peaks in long shadows across the foaming torrent that rushed along its stony bed at the bottom of the valley. Flights of pigeons were circling far below, and the distant notes of birds, and soft low murmur of the waters, was all that broke the universal stillness.

Two or three hours' ride through tangled thickets of sweet-smelling juniper brought us to a farm-house perched on a high rock; little rivulets and cascades rippling from under the trees, and making music in the dying sunlight. This was to be our resting-place for the night, so we climbed the steep ascent, and presented ourselves at the door—a miserable hovel, or pairs of hovels, rather, after all. A slatternly woman, with head tied up in a yellow handkerchief, made us welcome, explaining in execrable French that her husband was down with fever in one hut, but that the other (which did duty as kitchen as well) should be set apart for our sole accommodation.

The woman, who was a Spaniard, expressed much

delight at our arrival. Her husband being ill, she said, left her at the mercy of the wild tribes living in the hills, who, only two years ago, were in open insurrection, murdering all Europeans who came within their reach. She was glad of countenance and protection, if only for a single night, as she pleasantly informed us that she never went to bed without expecting to be killed before morning. This was probably a little female exaggeration, but it rendered the situation none the less thrilling, nevertheless! We had a cast-iron fowl for dinner, and then, piling masses of wood on the fire, rolled ourselves in our cloaks, to realize the truth of the fact that "our lodging was on the cold ground." A dilemma was caused by our door having no bolt, and not only that, but a large hole in the panel, through which, should there be a raid that night, we should be quietly picked off, without even a chance of seeing our opponents. *Vogue la galère*—we stuffed our saddle-cloths into the gap, and rolling a large barrel in front of the door, placed our pistols by our sides, and soon forgot our position in a visit to the land of dreams.

The following morning we were off before sunrise, after one of the hastiest of ablutions in a neighbouring rivulet. I was on the tiptoe of expectation, as we had been informed that the "Gorge de Sabet," through which we were to pass, was like a page from Doré's Dante. I was surprised at the number of streams in this "happy valley," which is certainly a most favoured spot, for besides the luxuriance of its vegetation it possesses silver and copper mines (which have not yet been worked), and mineral springs, that reminded me of the Vichy waters. *Nulle rose sans épine;* its woods and dales are infested with scorpions and tarantulas, besides a large and dangerous serpent peculiar to the district. The French are busily making a road through the gorge to unite Bougie with Sétif—a stupendous undertaking. A way will have to be cut in the living rock for a distance of five miles. We saw the men at work, striking the stone away with hammers, themselves hanging over the edge of the precipice by ropes and iron crampions. They have been working now about fifteen months, and a practicable path is made

along which mules can walk; our little caravan accordingly wound along it—dangerous work at times, for in some places the ledge is only about a foot and a half wide, and as you look down from your saddle you see the rushing torrent eddying along three hundred feet below, your path crackling ominously the while. I wonder they allow passengers to use so dangerous a track, as there is no protection as yet from dropping into the abyss. Whatever the danger we ran, we were well repaid, for it was a scene never to be forgotten in its weird majesty. The cataract fretting and whirling painfully below; the eternal precipices rising stern and cold from out the waters with granite peaks of steely-blue, grim shadows cast across their face; at the opening of the gorge in front a range of perpendicular cliffs, their tops just lit with the rosy tints of coming morn; a couple of eagles circling at a dizzy height—fit finish to the picture!

On emerging from the pass the scenery changes again to "Scotchy" hills and heathery slopes, which by degrees give place to barren mountains, rocks, and sandhills, with tufts of long grass here

and there, that only serve to make the general deficiency of verdure the more apparent. We had started early, knowing that we had a long day before us, but were detained for two hours in one burning spot, because the doctor lost his mule over the precipice, he fortunately being able to throw himself off before its disappearance from our view. This was an awkward dilemma, for time was precious, and yet we could not well leave the poor beast to its fate; so we taxed our energy and ingenuity, and ultimately succeeded, by means of the ropes we always carried with us, in dragging him up once more to *terra firma*, though so injured that the doctor had to shift his saddle to one of the baggage mules. The sun began to set as we were still struggling over the mountain paths, and it began to dawn on us that unless great haste was made we should be forced to put up with the hill-side for the night, an unpleasant alternative, as the winds are bitterly cold in these mountainous regions, besides which the honesty of our guides was by no means to be relied on. We pushed forward, therefore, leaving the baggage to the

tender mercies of the "thorn," and at length heard the baying of innumerable dogs, a sound which always tells of the proximity of a town. For the last three hours and a half we had had to walk and pull our mules along. They are objectionable animals at all times, but on this occasion rendered themselves more hateful than usual by assuming a timidity—which I am sure they did not feel—at the intense darkness of the night. We were glad enough to see the bright lights of the hotel, after a sixteen hours' march, and to hear the cheery voice of the buxom landlady, as she made us welcome, and assured us of the speedy preparation of dinner. Most thankful we were for that excellent repast, which lasted until past twelve o'clock, and woefully taken aback were we on being informed that the diligence for Constantine started in three hours from that time. There was no help for it, however, so we threw ourselves, dressed as we were, upon our beds, to snatch two hours' sleep.

A good diligence, with excellent horses, runs daily from Sétif to Constantine, as they are both

military depôts, and, consequently, the centre of a European colony.

We had now left the country of the Kabyles, and returned to the territory of the Arabs once more. The country around Sétif consists of a series of fertile plains, well cultivated on the whole, standing some 3,500 feet above the level of the sea. The town itself is a place of great strategic importance, being the key of communication between the East and the Algerian Tell. It is a sort of neutral ground, on which meet the interests of plain and mountain, and it consequently becomes a great market for the produce of the Medjana and Hodna. The European colonists make a continual outcry at the want of roads, and look forward with hope to the promised railway, which is at present a fine example of a *Château en Espagne.*

The people of the Sahara migrate to these plains with their flocks and herds during the summer season, and return to their houses beyond the hills in August, for the gathering of the date-crop.

The diligence rattled along as fast as five good horses could pull it, and landed us at the office in the Grande Place at Constantine about sunset. A curious square it is—half of it modern and decent cut stone; the rest a rambling mass of red-tiled róofs, apparently belonging to no houses in particular, and bearing the aspect of having been promiscuously thrown together by some giant hand.

CHAPTER VI.

COLONIZATION.

THERE is a violent party in France who would restrain the colonization of Algeria within very narrow limits, for fear of encroaching on the "holy rights" of the indigenous population. Such restraint would be impossible in practice, for the goodwill of the natives is not really to be trusted; and, where they are so much in the minority, the colonists would ever be open to pillage and attack. Whether these much-vaunted "holy rights" will bear the light of day is a subject open to much difference of opinion. God never gave the earth to man that he might leave it uncultivated; and those who fail to cultivate the land in which they live, deserve to be dispossessed. It is surely the duty of civilized nations to point the way, and constrain them by all means in their power to follow it.

To prove that the Arab does *not* fulfil his mission towards the land he lives in, we have but to dip into Government returns, and compare the produce of the native, after all his years of experience, with the shackled efforts of the colonist, who only settled here some thirty years ago.

We saw in the introductory chapter that the nature of the soil not only facilitates the breeding of sheep, but imperatively demands that branch of agriculture, as out of the 62,500,000 acres which are capable of some sort of cultivation, there are 27,500,000 acres (those of the Steppes) that can be put to no other use than sheep-feeding. Starting from this basis, we conclude that twenty-two million sheep might be raised on these 27,500,000 acres, considering that in Great Britain alone thirty million sheep are raised on 37,500,000 acres. It must be borne in mind that the North African race of sheep were the original stock from which all the best European breeds have sprung. They were imported into Spain under Claudius; while the merinos, which regenerated the sheep of Australia, also came indirectly from these shores.

They have now lost many of their original excellencies from neglect and poor feeding; but would soon regain them if placed on a better footing.

We may enter on another calculation:—The Algerian Tell is about half the size of France, and we may therefore calculate for it a little less than one-third of a sheep per acre, which, on the average of 35,000,000 acres, would give us nine million head of sheep. To prevent exaggeration, we will lower it to eight million head. Algeria, raised to its proper standard,* should produce thirty million head of sheep. This result we obtain by adding the eight millions calculated for the Tell to the twenty-two millions which the Steppes are capable of producing. Instead of this, the number given in the statistical returns is only ten millions!

The same return† tells us that the annual number of births (of sheep) exceeds by two millions

* "Traités d'Agriculture." Publiés par ordre du Ministre de la Guerre.

† Tableau du Commerce Général de l'Algerie, 1860.

the local consumption. What becomes of these two millions? We are told that only twenty thousand, on an average, leave the country yearly by exportation. We thus have a million and a half unaccounted for. If they do not leave the country, and are not consumed, we might consider ourselves authorized to conclude that they go to the annual augmentation of the ovine population. But we are told by official statement that the yearly production of wool remains stationary, and are thus brought to determine that Algeria loses annually 1,500,000 sheep, which may be reckoned at fifteen millions of francs, through the carelessness and ignorance of the Arab workers of the soil.

Again—with reference to horned cattle. There is less opening for the raising of oxen than of sheep, because the former can only exist in the Tell, whereas sheep find good grazing-grounds in the Steppes, over and above the Tell. An Algerian bull is very small, weighing sometimes only two hundredweight; whilst a cow is considered remarkable that gives more than a gallon and a half of milk per day. The bullock is used by the

Arab almost exclusively for labour, as he but seldom touches meat. The average head of cattle is a million and a half, in consideration of which number we may fairly compute the annual births at 500,000. In order to discover the actual increase in the bovine population, it will be necessary to deduct the animals exported every year, as well as those that fall in the shambles. The official return of exportation for 1864 was 2,345. In order to arrive at the number of beasts killed, we shall have to examine the rate of consumption, as official details here fail us.

Arabs proper eat no beef. The Kabyles may be estimated as consuming 8,700,000 pounds a year, while the European population may be set down as consuming 17,500,000 pounds, exclusive of the army, whose consumption is reckoned on the lists to be at the rate of nearly 10,000,000 pounds per annum. This, estimating the average weight of the wretched little animals at two hundredweight a-piece, would give us about 160,000 head of horned cattle as the annual number slaughtered. By adding this sum to that of the exportation, we

reach a total of 163,059 head, which total, being deducted from the 500,000 annual births, would give us a yearly augmentation of 336,941 oxen. An investigation of the lists of the Zekkat (or tax upon cattle), shows us that there is no increase worth speaking of, and we are therefore led to the conclusion that Algeria loses yearly the enormous number of 336,941 head of cattle through the culpable indolence and wicked carelessness of the Arab farmers.

It is the same with labour. Whereas in France, forty-two million acres are cultivated by ten million bullocks (not including mules and horses), the Arabs find difficulty in making one million bullocks do the work of two and a half million acres.

The amount of cattle raised by the colonists is, of course, less in number than that raised by the natives, their average of sheep being 40,000, and of oxen 25,000.* But when we come to the value of produce, the result is quite different. The sheep of the colonist bears wool that is finer in

* "La Colonie et les Colons."—Brochure, 1866.

quality, in consequence of greater care, as well as in quantity, than that of the Arab; whilst its value is additionally increased by its greater cleanliness. We may add that the winter mortality is much less with the European than the Arab, as the former makes some shift of covering for his beasts during the cold and rain, whilst the latter smokes his pipe in peace, his cattle rotting on the hill-side the while. What we have deduced from the statistics of sheep and oxen, we may repeat with little variation of the crops.

The cultivation of cereal crops will ever stand at the head of Algerian agriculture. There is a perpetual outlet for its superfluity. England alone would take what Algeria has to spare. Public documents attest that, were these provinces to rise to their highest limits of production, they might produce two hundred and twenty million bushels of cereal crops per annum.*

Arguing logically, we should conclude that colonists were only capable of obtaining much

* "L'Algérie: Essai Economique et Politique." Par C. Duvernois. Page 50.

lesser results than natives. Freshly planted in a new country, the climate is unknown to them, and they have yet to learn the capabilities of the ground, fighting all the time against sickness engendered by a change of temperature, as well as the feebleness of their own resources.

The Arabs, on the other hand, are of robust temperament, and perfectly acclimatized to every variety of heat and cold. They have studied the soil and climate from their youth; and, giving themselves up almost entirely to cereal cultivation, ought surely to excel at least in this branch of the farmer's art. In December, 1854, they had 1,650,000 acres under cultivation in the Tell—the colonists had 350,000 acres. The Arabs obtained eight and a quarter bushels of barley, and twelve and a quarter bushels of oats to the acre; the Europeans produced sixteen bushels of barley, and fifteen and a half bushels of oats to the acre—which is at an average of ten and a quarter bushels per acre for the Arabs, and fifteen and a half bushels for the Europeans.

From these figures, which are all drawn from

official documents, we perceive that if the colonists occupied the Tell in the same proportion as the Arabs, and cultivated it in the same manner as they do the colonized territory, they would produce (considering that there are thirty-five million acres in the Tell) 1,106,875,000 bushels (or 138,359,375 quarters) annually of cereal crops, where the Arabs produce 721,875,000 bushels (or 90,234,375 quarters); thus leaving a difference in favour of the Europeans of 48,125,000 quarters! The European, therefore, even under unfavourable circumstances, produces at the rate of nearly double as much as the native proprietor of the soil; which proves that the fault lies not with Algeria herself. She contains all the elements of agricultural wealth, to be drawn out only by the gradual substitution of the European for the Arab, as often as justice will permit.

There is a theory that "native labour is more economical than European." A glance at the actual state of affairs will show what a bad workman is the true Arab. The first argument upheld by the partizan of native industry is the un-

exceptionable abstemiousness of the Arab. A man of few wants, he can well afford to sell his labour at a low figure, asking 1 franc 50 cents per day, where the European demands 2 francs 50 cents. But the Arab's loftiest motive is avarice; he refuses himself substantial nourishment, the result of which is a visible failing of physical force. He is unable to continue any one kind of work, which will require the consecutive employment of any single set of muscles for more than a couple of hours at a stretch; and unfortunately, there is no combination of agricultural labour which will admit of constant change of occupation. His absolute ignorance also becomes a stumbling-block to a proper execution of a task, as well as his unutterable laziness. He is awkward with the pick, more awkward with the hoe; whilst his habit of going barefoot effectually prevents his working with the spade. As for his plough, it is a very unsatisfactory implement indeed, consisting of a long wooden tooth, which scrapes the ground with no power of resistance. He holds it loosely with one hand, while with the other he goads the

bulls, whose business it is to drag it over the soil.

When we consider that the Arab's paradise is to bask in the sun, and smoke and wrangle, we can well picture to ourselves the labourer that he makes. The colonist must therefore turn watch-dog for the nonce, and stand over his Arab labourer, if the task that he has set is ever to be accomplished at all.

The question has been asked, "Why is the Arab miserable?" Because Mohammed has filled him with a horror of the plough. The ancient historian, El-Bakhari, tells us, in his chapter on agriculture, that the Prophet, seeing one day a ploughshare in the habitation of a follower, said, "These things enter not into a man's house without shame entering his soul!"* Under the influence of such maxims as these the believer will become more lazy as he increases in grace, while the true saint will be a beggar or a thief—the only two means that I know of by which a man may live on other people's work!

* "Prolegomena of Ibn-Khaldoun." Vol. xix., p. 297. (French translation.)

It is interesting to look into the statistics of the colony, which were published to disprove the slurs cast upon French colonization by a few anonymous malcontents.

In 1863 the extent of European population in Algeria amounted to 213,061 souls, the births exceeding the deaths to the number of 2,743, whilst among the natives the deaths exceeded the births to the number of 2,396.* For the last ten years the births among the colonists have steadily exceeded the deaths, which leaves little doubt as to their fitness for acclimatization.

Amongst the colonists $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres were cultivated, and $30\frac{1}{4}$ bushels harvested per head of the cereal crop. Amongst the natives $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres were cultivated, and $8\frac{1}{4}$ bushels harvested. Total production of the year—Colonists, per head, 419 francs; Natives, per head, 68 francs. Taxes paid—Colonists, per head, 85 francs; Natives, per head, 8 francs. Commercial development—In 1830 (natives left to themselves) 5,000,000 francs. In

* "Comptes-rendus Officiels de la Situation de l'Algérie." 1864.

1862 (with the assistance of the colonists) 228,000,000 francs.

From the year 1830 to 1862 more than 300 communes and villages have been established by the colonists; while the native Arabs have for the most part abandoned the houses built for them by order of Government in the hope of making them a settled people. Useless labour!

It has been said that the Arabs are much depressed by their foreign yoke; that they are sufferers by colonization, as they have been robbed of their best land. Whatever land the colonists possess—about 1,750,000 acres—they have obtained either by Government concession (1,250,000 acres) or by regular purchase from the natives (500,000 acres).

These lands were far from being the best. Half of them were choked with dwarf-palms, the rooting up of which costs from eight to ten pounds an acre; another quarter was situated in the marshes, the draining of which is a heavy item of expenditure; whilst the remainder—430,000 acres at the utmost—was iron ground, that had never been properly

broken up, or cleared, and which ruined the European ploughs and other implements.

These lands have become the best in the country *now*, it is true, but only after the hard and earnest labour of the European workman. It is calculated that the colonist has, up to the present time, only deprived the native of 437,000 acres which are as yet capable of cultivation. So jealous, indeed, was the Government, at the time of occupation, of any possible injustice, that a law was passed preventing the Arabs from selling to the colonist any land *appertaining to the tribe*. This was to check the greed of the early followers of the invading army, who took what they could, regardless as to whether that which they bought really belonged to the seller or not. At the same time tracts were set apart by Government in each of the three provinces for the purposes of colonization —tracts that on the *then* average allowed a mile for every eight individuals. This was erroneously considered enough for all purposes, but the law was nevertheless modified some two or three years ago.

The Tell (or that portion of Algeria which is rendered fit for cultivation by winter rains), comprises, as I have elsewhere stated, 35,000,000 acres; and on this vast area there are only 2,261,800 natives, comprizing those of the towns. From this superficies we must deduct 1,750,000 acres, the property of the colonists, and 1,370,000 acres, occupied by forests, &c, which leaves a total of 3,120,000 acres. The natives have therefore the disposition of 31,750,000 acres. But to make the calculation more correct, we must bear in mind that the eight hundred thousand Kabyles, dwelling in the hills, are possessed of land entirely independent of the Arabs. This will leave 25,870,000 acres for the exclusive use of 1,460,000 Arabs, or Arab-Kabyles (or the enormous sum of sixteen or seventeen acres a head), who content themselves with the spontaneous fruits of the earth, or at most cultivate it in a very limited degree. Besides this, they have the sole right over the pasture land of the Steppes—a district extending over 12,500,000 acres—which bear comparison with the rich Pampas of America. To judge of the

wrong which is said to be done to the indigenous population, we may cite the case of the plains of the Mitidja, where colonization has been very much developed indeed. In this region the tribes have still much land to dispose of, were they enabled to do so by the existing laws.*

It must certainly be admitted that the misery of the Arab increases with his proximity to the colonist. Observe that I say *Arab*, and not *native*; for the cultivator and breeder of cattle cannot but be enriched by the new openings afforded by French commerce, whilst the demands

* The letter of the Emperor to the Duke of Malakoff, dated February 3rd, 1863, thus divides the agricultural district of the Tell :—

	Hectares.
Forests	1,800,000
Cultivatable Lands :—	
Belonging to the State . . 890,000	
Belonging to Colonists . . 420,000	
Belonging to Natives . . 2,000,000	
	3,310,000
Uncultivated Lands (rivers, lakes, and marshes) .	8,890,000
Total,	14,000,000
Or 35,000,000 Acres	

Note.—According to this statement, two-thirds of the Algerian Tell remain uncultivated.

for manual labour are of course multiplied in the same ratio.

It is the Arabs proper who suffer by this state of things—the men who look on labour as a servile task, and get their ground tilled by other hands, and who do not augment their revenues with the ascending scale of prices.

The products of the country have increased sixfold since the conquest in 1830.

"Formerly," says M. Warnier, late Governor of Oran, who draws his information from the old men of the Mitidja, "cereal crops were at so low a figure, that sacks were frequently left on the market-place from one Saturday till the next, for no man would risk being branded as a robber for a booty so poor, and so difficult to bear away."

Before the conquest the native produced less, and consequently worked less, than at present; and as he sold but little, laid up a store perforce in cereals and animal food, as well as in the wool which was to provide him with garments and habitation. Thus, in spite of the improvidence which is the curse of all fatalists, he was secured to a

certain extent against an evil day. When the French appeared in Algeria, they found amongst the tribes grain that would serve for ten years at least. This was gathered together in spite of themselves, it is true, from lack of outlet; but, result of what cause you like, it guarded them from famine and distress. Now, all is changed. In years of abundance the Arab sells his corn and wool, and instead of laying out his money, stows it away in a secret hiding-place.

He sells at a low price in lucky seasons, and buys at a high price in times of want—his capital, between the periods of sale and of repurchase, having produced absolutely nothing. No society could thrive under such conditions.

Although the natives are calculated to possess a capital of eight hundred million francs, this capital is for them a dead letter. Let us suppose that the Arab gains by the produce of the year the sum of 10,000 francs. He cannot always carry it on his person, for fear of the risks of loss or murder; neither can he hide it in his tent, which is open to every passer-by, and contains no chests

nor boxes. In default of a public bank, which he would not trust even if it existed, he is forced to bury his money in some private corner, and often carries the secret to the grave, whereby the money is lost for ever, for he dares not tell his family of his treasure, in case they might dissipate it, in spite of all precaution. If, in our country, the fathers of our families were to withdraw from circulation the equivalent of eight hundred million francs, and hide it in a napkin, we too should soon reach the condition of misery of the Arab of to-day! If, in imitation of their conquerors, the natives would lay out their capital under favourable auspices, the interest would amount to about forty million francs per annum, in which case they would be rich; whereas now, with their money *en cachette*, they are poorer than when their hiding-places contained only corn, and wool, and oats. It is now easy to understand why the natives suffer in proportion to the proximity of colonization. Far from European markets and ways of communication they keep their produce, and possess but little money; the moment they approach

the colonist they succumb to the temptation of the miser, and, like the miser, will rather suffer hunger than touch their much-loved store.

There exists also another class, whose lot calls forth the pity of philanthropists; and in its ranks are found the sons of the Oran nobles, who did good service to the State in the crisis of 1830. These prodigals received great fortunes, and are now possessors only of great debts. Their liabilities have been paid by Government over and over again; but still they struggle in the mire of impecuniosity. It is the officers of the Bureaux Arabes who are to blame in this matter, for have they not encouraged these "grand seigneurs" to graft the luxury of French life on the magnificence of Orientals? Was it not they that taught them the pleasures of the gaming table, and the advantages of the double seraglio of native and European houris?

The greater portion of the colonists of Algeria came from France at the bidding of the French Government, for their establishment was found to be one of the most imperious necessities of the

Army of Occupation. Before their arrival, the soldiers were fed on wretched meat from Spain or Tunis, economised by the introduction of salt beef from the United States. Since the colonists have settled in Algeria, they have good fresh meat; whilst the fevers of the marshes are rendered less prevalent than of yore by the constant draining which is necessary to cultivation. The necessity being urgent, therefore, Government issued proclamations, offering large premiums to such as would settle on African soil; inducing the soldiers, at the same time, who had served their quantum of years, to seek a wife at home, and start afresh in life beyond the seas. "Take a wife," said the proclamation, "and on your return to Africa you shall receive a house, a field, some cattle, and such supplies as shall last until the cutting of the first crop. The Governor-General and Minister of War conducted their soldiers' marriages in true military style, for they were in a very great hurry.

The first band not being deemed sufficient, a new appeal was made, to those retired from the Army, bidding them leave their firesides, and

transplant their hearths elsewhere. A large number of volunteers answered the call.

The convoys embarked on the quays of the Seine, whence they were to be taken to Marseilles; and every departure was the signal for a solemn fête, presided over by the Dignitaries of the State. Arrived in Algeria, the clergy advanced, and with much ceremony blessed the new comers, and welcomed them to the land of promise. Men who were bound for America were forcibly detained, and directed towards the wastes lying opposite Toulon; and all who could be forced or enticed to quit their native land, were pushed by the head and shoulders, so to speak, on to the African coasts of the Mediterranean.

"Quand à ces hardis colons qui sont venus implanter en Algérie le drapeau de la France et, avec lui, tons les arts d'un peuple civilisé, ai-je besoin de dire que la protection de la métropole ne leur manquera jamais?"

Such were the words of the Emperor in his speech of the 19th September, 1860; and we therefore conclude that the colonists have much

to expect from Government. These expectations have certainly not yet been fully realized.

If we compare the French system of colonization with that pursued in America, we find a wide difference of result. Whereas, in the United States, everything is allowed to march freely onwards, taking its own pace to the desired end; in Algeria the State claims the right of arranging and regulating all things, enclosing the colonist in the buckram of a system which it is treason to discuss. Between the partisans of liberty and the upholders of oppression, Europe has already given her decision. Five hundred thousand of her children are yearly wafted to America, whilst in thirty-seven years Algeria has been unable, in spite of Government proclamations, and almost coercion, to draw more than three hundred thousand colonists into her bosom.* That the fault lies, not in the resources of the country, but in official misrule, official documents lead us to believe. We cannot admit, as some would have

* "Geographie Universelle." M'Carthy.
"L'Algérie devant l'Empereur." By Warnier. Page 3.

us do, that the crowds who each year leave their firesides in search of fortune, are guided by a vain caprice in their choice of a new home. All these men, starting from different points, could not, without a concerted plan, fall into one common error; neither could the mass of capitalists, who are ever seeking a new investment for their money, be so blind to their own interests as to neglect a country like Algeria without some serious reason at the bottom.

Government authorities are so sensitive to any charge of assisting a colonist at the expense of a native, that they run into an opposite extreme. In all cases of quarrel requiring judgment, the colonist invariably goes to the wall. Thus they say of the Bureaux Arabes (or ruling power, composed of French officers), that they are "more Arab than the Arabs themselves." This produces a feeling of insecurity amongst the settlers, which is eminently paralysing to the progress of that in which the state professes such profound interest.

The whole system of taxation requires serious amendment; and there can be little doubt that

those in authority are much to blame for the slow progress of the roads and railways—the very arteries, as it were, of civilization and of commerce.

Of course the first aspiration of the colonist is to find himself completely *French*—that is to say, to continue the enjoyment of the rights of citizenship which he possessed across the Mediterranean; and his second is an ardent desire for such permanent institutions as will satisfy him of the safety of his enterprise and the future of his children. There have been fifteen different hands on the rudder of public affairs within thirty-five years, which has resulted in fifteen different styles of government, equivalent to a loss of millions to Algeria. Want of ground is the greatest grievance of all. It is not denied that much of the territory set aside for colonization is not yet cultivated. But most of this ground is unattainable by the farmer, being the property of absentees, who received it in a weak moment at the time of the Conquest, and are now keeping it, or rather, laying it by until such time as it shall have

trebled its present value. Such remnants as are not thus circumstanced are for the most part rendered unfit for labour by lack of water or communication. Thus there is at present little room either for new emigrants or the children of the existing ones. The latter are growing up day by day, and find no new field for enterprise in the narrow limits of the concessions of their parents. Be it understood that the colonists have no desire to "spoil" the native; they are perfectly ready to buy, if facilities were only opened for that purpose. Under the present system, if a purchaser arrive, he must obtain his land either from Government—in which case he will be kept waiting many months, through the old story of red tape; or else from the Arabs themselves, who ask exorbitant prices, and are prevented by certain complications of the laws from parting with any large tracts *that are contiguous to one another.*

Security, salubrity, and facilities for traffic, are amongst the first conditions of a rising colony. The concessionists have long learned that they must depend upon themselves for the safety of their

farms and homesteads, as the soldiers are sprinkled too widely about the country to be of much use in moments of attack; and have made known to Government (through the medium of their Governors-General) that they can never be certain of security until their own population equals the number of the belligerent natives, who are estimated at a million and a half—not including the Kabyles, who do not attack colonists.

I need not insist upon the necessity of completing with all speed the finishing of the roads and the draining of the marshes, because the largest portion of the recent loan of one hundred million francs (from the Fremy-Talabot Company) has been consecrated to that work. A power of obtaining tools and instruments of culture at a cheap rate is a want much felt at present; and this favour the Emperor has lately consented to grant.

In conclusion—with the experience they have acquired, and the progress they have already attained, the colonists no longer wish for the leading-strings of Government. All they ask of it is

the opportunity of purchasing land. This request granted, they undertake to stock it with human beings, and to bring it to its proper value, on the understanding that all present obstacles be withdrawn which frustrate their economy and paralyze their efforts.

CHAPTER VII.

CONSTANTINE.

CONSTANTINE may be considered as the granary of Algeria. It is the largest of the three provinces, and is, on the whole, the most flourishing one also. Much grain goes to France, by way of Philipville, which has been grown on the land around; and still more will leave the country annually, as soon as the projected rail-road is completed. Field-labour is chiefly done by oxen, and stout little horses, bred in numbers by the Arab tribes, and which fetch from seven to eight pounds sterling apiece. Donkeys carry the necessary burdens, and are valued at from fifteen to twenty-five francs a-head (not quite one pound sterling). Human labour is very cheap. Wherever money is to be obtained, crowds of Arabs will crop up either from amongst the neighbour-

ing tribes, or from the ranks of the homeless nomad population, which North Africa can boast of possessing in such profusion. They are a vagabond lot, but with due supervision will work pretty well for a short time. When they have received a month's wages, they strike work until it is spent; but their places are easily filled by others, if the proprietor is content thus to change his men so frequently—a matter of no great moment where unskilled labour is employed. They are a dull, phlegmatic race, and in no case can be trusted with a matter of any delicacy. The negroes, originally natives of the Soudan, are much more energetic than their white-robed brethren, and are much employed by Government as masons and as carpenters; always, of course, working under European surveillance. In the summer months men work from 5 A.M. till 11 A.M., and rest during the great heats till 2 P.M.

There is much good shooting in the province. Lions and panthers in the neighbourhood of Batna and of Bona; water-fowl in the Steppes of Hodna; woodcocks, plovers, partridges, and hares in the

outskirts of Constantine itself. A shooting-license is only necessary just round the town, and costs £1. The season lasts from August to April.

The town of Constantine is one of the strongest in the world, as regards its natural adaptabilities for defence. It occupies a sort of promontory, with from eight to nine hundred feet of sheer precipice all round it. The bases of these cliffs are washed by the turbid waters of the Roumel, which flows through a deep ravine, forming on one side of the town a series of fine cascades. Nearly all the houses are of the usual Arab construction—low, irregular-tiled roofs, with jutting eaves and very narrow streets winding in and out of darkness into half-light, and up and down queer steep staircases in an inextricable labyrinth. Each house is furnished with extensive cellarage, hewn from the solid rock; and in these stores are collected enormous quantities of grain and flour, for which the district indeed is famous.

The city will shortly be much altered in its most important features, as a limited liability company is now being created for the formation of a new

Arab settlement beyond the ravine. When this company has completed its undertaking, neat French houses will take the place of the present ones, and a spacious Rue Impériale will intersect its entire length. At present the Arab quarter occupies two-thirds of the town, which contains a population of 40,000 people, 28,000 of whom are natives, and retains its primitive appearance.

Let us wander through the streets. Leaving the Grande Place, we will enter a narrow dark bazaar, which is, after all, one of the openings into one of the principal thoroughfares in the place, as far as regards traffic and commerce. Poky little open stalls, elbowing each other, and hanging out in brilliant rivalry their numerous wares and stuffs, coloured handkerchiefs by the hundred, and burnouses by the gross, embroidered shoes and embroidered saddles, stop the way, all hanging in clusters for sale. Beware, or we shall be run over in the half-lit passage. Loaded mules come trotting along, knocking the passengers to the right and left, and we are forced to retire into a cotton merchant's stall to avoid being upset by passing quadrupeds.

A great deal of traffic is going on ; men on horses and men on foot, all hurrying to and fro, evidently conscious (unlike Arabs in general) that "time is ever on the wing."

A very quaint bazaar truly, cramped and low, and smelling a little damp withal, for the sun never penetrates through the rough timber roof thrown across the street from eave to eave. In times of rain it is rendered muddy and sloshy by the many feet of passers-by, and never returns to its original dryness. Further on the same street debouches into daylight, upstairs and downstairs, now under the overhanging walls of ancient houses, now under the minarets of the great mosque, and then plunging into obscurity once more under low, cellar-like archways, where darkness is just made visible.

The different trades occupy different streets, and keep exclusively to themselves. Thus you see rows of ironmongers' shops, and further on the shoemakers squatting on their carpets, and saddle-embroiderers busy over their work. These people really do work. Buying and selling commences

very early, and is carried on until very late. The streets of Constantine are well worthy of quiet sauntering. The shops, or rather booths, are unlike those of Algiers, being even more primitive here than in the capital. The inmates are raised a little above the level of the street, and have barely room to turn, some of them, as they stitch away cross-legged, spectacles on nose, in stockinged feet—their shoes placed on the narrow causeway just outside the precincts of their stalls. Their goods are packed away neatly on shelves around the walls, and in a few cases an assistant is perched on a larger species of shelf above the head of his master—economy of space indeed! While you are looking over his wares, and bargaining for a piece of stuff, the voice of the muezzin is suddenly heard, and straightway the shopman becomes unaware of your existence, bowing and muttering, and rubbing his forehead on the ground in the course of his midday devotions. In a few moments he returns gravely to the everyday world, and if you are still there, takes up the conversation at the point where it was broken off. They have a very

unwieldy method of closing their shops—heavy wooden shutters, folding together, and clamped with monstrous padlocks; the whole of which edifice is taken down during business hours, and being piled up, forms a sort of shelf or counter between the seller and his customer.

In the market-place a busy scene was being enacted one day. Crowds of the white-robed, screaming and gesticulating, as is necessary, seemingly, to all their undertakings. I forced my way through the throng to the stalls of the jewellers, and spent some time in examining the goldsmiths' work. These "stalls" consist of nothing more than portable glass cases, which lie in the mud, presided over generally by a withered negress. In these cases are rows of quaint earrings, worked roughly in gold and uncut stones, necklaces and hair-pins of the same costly material. At the first sniff of a buyer, sundry men make their appearance, and sell him whatever he may fancy according to weight, regardless of workmanship, which, by the way, is never very elaborate. There is little use attempting to bargain with

these gentlemen, as they only point to their scales and shrug their shoulders. The silver-workers, who are separate from the goldsmiths, and make a more brilliant show, display huge anklets and brooches and interminable chains, very bright and gay to look at, though, I believe, considerably adulterated with baser metal. The gold, on the contrary, is very pure and pliable, and of good colour. All workers in the precious metals are obliged to surrender their goods for Government inspection, which ensures the purchaser a genuine article. Very picturesque they looked, these groups of buyers and sellers, and that brilliant merchandise, in the broad sunlight. The principal booths were on the steps of the Grand Mosque, and reminded me, in the Babel of voices and variety of goods, of the day when Christ drove men such as they out of the Temple long ago. There were Arabs pushing through the crowd, hawking burnouses; the real "Djerid," from the neighbourhood of Tunis, the finest of woollen manufacture, only forty francs—a plausible-looking article enough, but sure to have somewhere a latent blemish art-

fully hidden by its perfidious owner; cake merchants, tray on head, shouting with stentorian voices—a deafening hubbub; a man with coins and uncut stones, emeralds, and strings of pearls, gold anklets, pins and brooches. Further on, a shop, high up a multitude of steps; some wonderful embroidered jackets of red velvet and gold, magnificent burnouses and gaily-patterned coverings; the owner of all this grandeur apathetic, with a cigarette, half concealed under the draperies exposed for sale.

While I am taking in all this, I am surrounded by a yelling crew, all anxious to sell me something, and outshriek their competitors. Do I want a tent?—or a saddle?—or a necklace?—or a pair of shoes? No. Then perhaps a pair bellows, or a padlock? and so on, until, nearly deafened by the din, I am accosted by a Moor, who whispers mysteriously that he *really* is the possesser of quite the loveliest thing in black burnouses, which is going for a song. Without a word I follow him down dark alleys, and under archways, and at length have to stoop to cross the

threshold of his dwelling. I am now in the small courtyard of one of the real old houses of the Arab quarter, with two or three tiers of galleries, from the highest of which come sounds of whispers and stifled giggling. Several women put their heads over the balustrade, the regular Constantine type—a handsome head, fine complexion, with dark eyes; the whole effect, however, is marred by the unsightly fashion of painting a broad black line across the face, to serve as eyebrows. On the head a sort of pointed black cap, formed in some cunning manner out of a satin handkerchief, the neck muffled in gauze, through which you catch a glimpse of jewels and gilt ornaments. Long gold chains round the head, and flapping in festoons under the chin, complete the peculiar costume of these ladies, as far as it is visible above the balcony balustrade. Sauntering through the streets on a sunny day, the wanderer comes upon groups of these women lying in "heaps," so to speak, and basking in the genial warmth. They are certainly very handsome, as a rule, with rich warm skins, a little inclined to

olive, though fair rather than dark. Their hair being always concealed, and their eyebrows plastered with black, effectually precludes any attempt at a guess as to the colour of their locks. In their whole "get up," they form a wondrous bit of colour, more especially when lying thus in groups. The black head-dress sets off the complexion, and the gauzy something over the neck and breast softens the whole *ensemble*, while the dress itself is usually tight-fitting and very long, made of some rich brocaded stuff or delicate satin; deep-crimson, perhaps, all over great gold leaves, or soft-toned, pearly silk, embroidered with birds, beasts, and fishes. These ladies make a "clink-clink," as they walk, by means of their heavy anklets, which just glimmer out now and again from under the sweeping skirts.

The above-mentioned voluminous gold chains and a profusion of bracelets complete their attire. Amongst the richer classes the ladies are much given to embroidery, the whole of the body of their gowns being sometimes a mass of intricately worked gold thread and precious stones, which

dance and sparkle in the sun with dazzling effect.

Finding on inspection that the "sweetest thing in black burnouses" was, as might have been conjectured, a horrid "sell," I left the Moor with much abuse, and proceeded to visit the palace of the Bey Hadj'Ahmed, which stands in the great square—a building offering nothing specially remarkable on its exterior, though its interior carries one back to the "Arabian Nights."

Hadj'Ahmed was the last Bey of Constantine, and extorted this gem among buildings from the purses of his merchant subjects, its completion taking place just a year before the occupation of the province by the French. He lived in it only on two occasions, the second of which was as a prisoner. It was thus that the desires and blessings of his people, commemorated by a tablet that still retains its place in the wall, were to be accomplished :—

"In the name of a gracious and merciful God, for the master of this palace peace and prosperity; a life like the cooing of the dove, glory without stain, and joys unending till the day of resurrection!"

Crossing the threshold, you find yourself in a large quadrangle surrounded by a white marble arcade. On one side of this passage the wall is encrusted half-way up with coarse yellow and green tiles, which form with the frescoes above, and the white marble floors and door-cases, a very harmonious *tout-ensemble.* The frescoes are of the most uncouth; views of towns bristling with minarets, boats and ships and fishes, all much the same size, jostling each other beneath their walls; cannons belching fire, and flocks of unwieldy birds —all in a delightful naiveness of perspective. The other side of the colonnade is open to the sky —horse-shoe arches, supported on light marble columns, through which are seen glimpses of oranges and palms and plashing fountains; the whole opening of each archway being trellised over with a fragrant curtain of delicate creepers and sweet-scented jessamine. Above this an open gallery communicating with the private apartments, and windows closely barred with a grating of gold and many colours. Beyond the first quadrangle are two smaller ones; all three decorated

after the same fashion—the farthest one being carefully railed off for the use of the women by means of wooden tracery, of fine workmanship, and oriental in design.

From this "Holy of Holies" the effect is singularly pleasing. The various gardens and airy passages are seen in vanishing perspective, with a glittering of gilt lamps and a shimmering of lovely leaves. The tall and stately palm, entwined with almond-trees in flower, the glistening boughs and golden fruit of the orange, and the long white bells of the datura, all unite in a pleasant shade, and load the air with perfume. Happy lives these women must have led, I should fancy—little of care, and everything that should soothe and lull the spirit into rest. It is almost impossible to look upon this scene without feeling sleepy; the trailing curtains of climbing tendrils just stirring in the breeze; the splashing noise of water falling on the ear in a drowsy hum; a deep blue sky caught in patches at intervals; and a distant murmur of voices, which tells of labour in the work-a-day world without.

Once more in the street, I found myself caught up in the crowded mid-day market—shrieks and cries as usual, with much bustle and jostle and hurry; so having nothing better to do, I watched the proceedings of an anxious negress who was bargaining for a loaf—a fine tall woman, with a well-turned arm, that steadied the basket on her head. She received her portion, paid her money, and got back her change, which she counted over several times slowly and methodically. By degrees a bewildered expression settled on her brow, and she went through the counting process once again. It was evidently not right. Down went the basket, with its precious freight of eggs, and she crossed her arms over her broad chest, and distended her nostrils for a good wrangle. Quietly the baker explained the transaction again and again. No, it was not right; she would not be convinced. The look of uncertainty hardened in her eyes, and she *thought* deeply. Her luckless adversary imagined it was all over, and began attending to other customers, when a light seemed to break in upon her. Down went the heavy head-pad into

the basket on the top of the eggs, and she girded her loins anew for the fray. More explanation, more vituperation, and then—more counting. Once more the coppers were told over, one by one, deliberately and slowly; more thought, and then suddenly such a torrent of abuse, and such desperate waving of arms, as seemed likely to endanger the safety of those around. "O Allah!—O Mahomet!" Rapid utterance and guttural threats, and then again the arms whirled like a windmill around her head.

The baker had by this time long since resumed his labours, so the threats and execrations of the lady were wasted on thin air. After a long pause, and a settled frown on the swarthy face, the negress seized her basket with a jerk, and strode rapidly away, upsetting sundry smaller specimens of human nature in her hasty and ignominious exit. It seems that among the more ignorant natives much difficulty is found as to money. So much was formerly done by barter, that they cannot be brought to realize the system of exchange of coins, although of course there

did exist an Arab system of money as well.

A walk through the lesser markets, which are crowded with booths and gay awnings, sellers of sweetmeats and well-stocked fruit-stalls, and up a few precipitous and stifling streets, leads the traveller to the edge of the cliff, up to the very verge of which are planted little white houses, with rough red-brown eaves and crumbling steps, from amid whose interstices rise straggling palms, with no roots to speak of.

We resolved to gain some idea of the place as seen from the exterior; so, leaving the great square by its large arched gates, we made our way down over the barren broken ground which lies in front of them, and across the little bridge over the Roumel, that spans the opening of the ravine on its south-western extremity. Here we clambered up the rocks again, and skirted the town by the edge of the precipice until we reached the bridge of El Cantara, a new construction, only four years old, that crosses the chasm some nine hundred feet above the water, and will eventually join the new Rue Imperiale.

It was at this point that the French were repulsed when they endeavoured to take the town. And no wonder; how they ever came to make so audacious an attempt it is almost impossible to conceive! We were rather disappointed at the general effect of the great pile from this side. The houses look mean and dirty (as they are), and the amount of refuse perpetually being thrown down into the river does not improve either its clearness, or the cleanliness of the rocks themselves. These rocks are broken here and there by slopes of barren, half-starved green, which detract seriously from the apparent height, while the offensive odours that everywhere assail the unwary pilgrim compel him to hurry on and hold his breath. Beyond the bridge, we mounted up to the new college that crowns the heights, and from its terraces obtained a good view of the town and the surrounding mountains. It is a fine building, not yet completed, forming a quadrangle, having nineteen windows in a row on each of its sides, and surrounded by a plateau, which will be made into a playground by the students.

Much has been done to improve the condition of the original inhabitants. Large schools or colleges were opened, at a moderate rate of payment, for the education of native children—one in each of the three provinces—at the time of the occupation. These are now to be replaced by smaller ones in each of the principal towns, where French, and the usual broader branches of knowledge, will be taught gratis to Christian and Moslem alike.

We now wished to leave the upper ground, in order, if possible, to catch a glimpse of the cascades on the north; but a descent seemed impossible amid the rugged crags and masses of cactus, so we made a little *détour*, and soon found ourselves scrambling down a way, half staircase and half path, cut in the solid rock. The tunnel of the new railway is being excavated at this point, and an arduous undertaking it must be—perpetual blasting and embankment.

The view that now opened out was very fine. Monster rocks in looming masses above and below, while in front beyond the valley lay an

undulating middle distance of rich browns and yellows, and the high grounds about Sétif purpling into distance. The barren and stony path ended abruptly, changing suddenly to green luxurious vegetation. Here we found hot springs of a ferruginous and sulphury character, which rose in natural baths or hollows of the stone, shaded with soft cool leaves and maidenhair fern. To strip and jump in was the work of a moment; and a most refreshing dip it was—the water warm and pleasant, tufts of delicate green springing from the rock, and reflecting themselves in the almost unnaturally clear spring. A stray young man offered to lead the way to the cascades; and it was lucky that we accepted his offer, for we should never otherwise have found our way through the intricate underwood.

The vegetation alone was well worth the walk. Ghostly fig-trees of ancient growth, their great branches crawling over the ground like giant serpents in an agony; around them, here and there, rough and knotted vines, and a profusion of immense brambles, clusters of thick-leaved clematis,

trailing its tendrils over everything; and from out this tangled mass long naked groups of bamboo, swaying and soughing in the wind some twenty feet above our heads; huge boulders, too, hoary and grey, and a suspicion of dank water half concealed from sight.

A sudden turn brought us in view of the waterfalls, and we accordingly lit a cigar to contemplate them in peace. Striking falls they are, chiefly in consequence of their utter nakedness; a series of three or four, falling in tiers one below the other, over a hard brown bed, worn smooth by constant friction; at the bottom a large pool of dirty opaque water. What a pity it is that so few of these African streams can lay claim to anything like purity! Intimating that we should have to cross the falls at the top in order to reach Constantine again, our guide started off afresh, and now the serious work began —climbing on hands and knees over slippery stone, which seemed meant to precipitate us into the chasm below; at another time crawling through a hole that would barely let our bodies

pass (luckily we are all long and thin); and then, struggling like flies on a wall across an almost perpendicular surface, clinging to prickly cactus bushes, and any available eminence in the rock, wishing wildly for a dozen hands to save ourselves from imminent destruction;—such was the ordeal we had to go through before reaching the broad bed from which the cataract springs down. This flat, stony plain was a sensation in itself, spreading away with intervening pools into a great smooth surface, the light just tipping the edges of the stones, surrounded on three sides by beetling precipices, rising gloomily 800 feet sheer into the air, and terminating at the extreme end in a natural arch, through which we caught a perspective of more arches and dense obscurity. The severe grandeur of the scene was enhanced in our eyes by the waning light. The abrupt crags lost form and distinctness, and could almost be conjured into fantastic fiends in the gloaming. The river-bed seemed so invitingly smooth and silvery, as to suggest some uncanny ball-room, and one pictured to oneself troops of the spirits

who inhabit rocks dancing out in wild procession from the depths before us, coming, perhaps—who knows?—from the bowels of the earth. Cross hands and down the middle, unearthly throng! Elfin shapes glinting in the moonlight, with shadowy feet, that twinkle to a fairy measure—now dashing the peaceful pools into clouds of diamonds, sparkling in the sickly beams, twisting and turning, shrieking and whirling, with weird and eldrich laughter, that echoes and re-echoes among the eternal hills!

A sharp pull up a steep ascent brought us back to the hum-drum world, and in another ten minutes we were once more within the city walls.

It is worthy of remark that the town of Constantine itself possesses two great branches of commerce over and above the produce of the surrounding country.

These are the fabrication of articles of leather, and the fabrication of articles of wool. The principal sellers of skins live in the tribes of Kabylie, whence they come to sell them to the Constantins, who drive a brisk trade in shoes dyed red by a

very aboriginal process. A bull's skin fetches from four to ten francs; a goat's from half a franc to two francs; and a sheep's about a franc and a half. It is estimated that the saddlers sell goods to the value of 600,000 francs yearly, while the shoemakers do business to the extent of 900,000 francs per annum. The woollen trade consists chiefly of the articles of dress worn by the Arab population. 60,000 haiks (or draperies wound round the head), and about 25,000 burnouses are said to leave Constantine in the course of twelve months; while coarse carpets and baggage-sacks, or *tellis*, are manufactured in great quantities. Trade is carried on to the extent of sixteen million francs per annum in native saddlery, embroidery, iron horse-shoes, &c.*

We paid a visit to the shop of the brothers Oulaid, in order, if possible, to learn something about the commercial aspect of the country. These brothers Oulaid have large stores here as well as at Algiers, and do a great deal in the way of import of British stuffs. There is a great sale in

* "Rapport Officiel au Ministre de la Guerre." 1865.

Constantine for every variety of cotton, silk, or muslin manufacture, the quality depending, of course, on the time of year. In March and April an enormous quantity of figured cottons from Manchester, and muslins from Scotland and Switzerland, find their way into Arab *ménages*. The natives are perfectly capable of distinguishing good from bad, and will pay a good price for a good article, whereas at Algiers cheapness and showiness are considered very essential points. Here Swiss muslins are preferred to those of British make, on account of the extra finish of the material; the more likely reason being, I should imagine, that the really first-class Scotch muslins do not penetrate to this market. There is a duty of 15 per cent. on English manufacture, which is a drawback to its success. All duties are payable by the sender, who values the articles at his own invoice price, instead of the other system, of goods being valued in the colony according to the state of the market there. French goods, on the other hand, only pay freight expenses, which are estimated at about two pounds the hundred kilo-

grammes (or about two cwts.). British exports average a month on their journey from England to their Algerian destination. There is a good sale for anything in the way of showy handkerchiefs, which are bought up by the women in great numbers. An enormous quantity of them are made at Lyons, of silk worked in with gold twist, expressly for this market.

The commercial movement in Algeria from 1831 to 1855 rose to 1742 million francs, of which 1,463 million francs represented the imports, and 279 million francs the exports.

The imports may be thus subdivided:—French manufacture exclusively, 866 millions; foreign manufacture exclusively, about 400 millions; while the exports* may be classed thus:—Algerian products, destined for France, 191 millions; other countries, 88 millions.

* The principal classes of merchandise imported into Algeria from 1831 to 1855 were—Grain, flour, wine and spirits, materials for building, iron, steel, wood, sugar, coffee, tobacco, prepared skins.

The principal exports were—Oil, wool, wax, untanned leather, ores of iron, copper, and lead, cotton, silk, coral.—*M'Carthy:* "*Geographie Economique et Politique.*"

The town of Algiers monopolizes one half of the commerce of importation. Philipville and Oran do the rest.

As it is not always possible to dispose at once of merchandize imported, Government has established warehouses *real* and *fictitious*. There are two real warehouses, one at Algiers and one at Oran, where goods may be deposited until sent on into the interior, or re-embarked. The fictitious are private warehouses in the smaller towns, whose owners have obtained a right to take in goods on the same terms as in the real. These are only in places where there is not sufficient local commerce to authorize the establishment of a real warehouse.

In 1854 goods were deposited to the value of 800,000 francs, destined to be smuggled into Spain (principally cotton stuffs).

The commerce with the interior is done almost entirely by merchant-caravans.

Independent of its other foreign relations, Algeria carries on a commerce with Tunis on the one side, and Morocco on the other. The principal articles imported from Tunis are silks and stuffs manu-

factured in that country, perfumes, arms, and sulphur. Tunis takes from Algeria woollen stuffs of ordinary quality, dates from the Oued Souf, and straw hats from Tougourt.

From Morocco are imported leather, arms, veils, and women's combs, silks, horses, and fuller's earth.

Considerable trade is also carried on with the black country of Timbuctoo. Thence are imported negroes, buffalo hides, elephants' tusks, senna, and the peculiar blue-checked cotton stuff made in the Soudan; whilst Algeria sends back in return cereals, butter, oil, dates, and ostrich-plumes, spices, coral, and spun cotton.

Constantine covers an area of twelve acres, and stands 2,100 feet above sea-level.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSTANTINE TO BONA.

THE 13th of January found us again on the road; mounted this time on really good mules—a pleasant change after the sorry beasts we were usually in the habit of having thrust upon us. Our Scotchman's mule was vicious, and had to have his head wrapped in a burnous when his rider got on his back. It is a curious thing how these animals distinguish between the dark garb of the European and the white woollen folds of the native's garment, trembling and snorting at the former, and taking little heed of the latter. Thus, while my companions were always obliged to proceed daintily and with caution in the grave matter of mounting, I invariably found but little difficulty, as I wore a white burnous in the early morning starts.

On leaving Constantine, we kept to the hill country, and in the first day's ride (of fifty-seven miles) passed through the great cattle district, a series of undulating downs, covered with little round stones, presenting an aspect of barrenness to the unsophisticated eye, but splendid pasturage, nevertheless. Throughout the entire district the scenery was monotonous in the extreme—waving grass, and tufts of rushes, with here and there a small ravine and its attendant water-course; no barriers of any sort, and not a stick, tree, or shrub to be seen throughout the whole fifty-seven miles. It would make a fine hunting-country—there are swarms of foxes, and lynx, and wild cats; and good shooting, too—partridges and hares to a fabulous extent.

At midday we stopped for breakfast at a large farm-house, which is also a caravansary. The farmer who inhabits it has been settled here for eight years, and is doing well. He holds a farm of 5,000 acres, and sends yearly to France 2,000 head of horned cattle, and a like amount of sheep, which are marched in three days to Bona, and are

thence shipped at the rate of £1 a head to Marseilles. He holds his land under Government grant, and was among the last who received that encouragement. The caravansary pays all personal expenses of living and clothing, so he ought to put by a good deal of money. Panthers come up sometimes, and make havoc among his sheep. But he does not seem to dread this so much as the sirocco winds, that sweep with impetuous force across the immense plains, and dry up the grass even more than the summer heats. We had a taste of it ourselves—being literally almost blown out of our saddles and suffocated by the fine hot sand, which, by the way, is the chief cause of the ophthalmia which is so prevalent all over the north-east portion of Africa.

At nightfall we reached a village—the only one we had seen since those in the neighbourhood of Constantine—and it refused us accommodation, all beds being engaged for the market on the morrow. We were in an awkward fix—tired after a ride of fifteen hours; not another habitation within seventeen miles; and this excessively

doubtful welcome at our only place of shelter! Passing from door to door, we begged to be taken in, representing that beds were superfluities to us, who were so well acquainted with the "cold ground." After being bandied backwards and forwards, from pillar to post, we were at length put up in a newly-built room, which possessed an immense double door, giving on the street, that refused to be shut, and was much in need of Julius Cæsar to "stop a hole and keep the wind away." The walls were damp with wet plaster, and the whole affair bore a cavernous and sepulchrally earthy aspect. No fire was possible, so a comforter and a great-coat were our only chance of warmth. Animal heat is all very well in its way, but coals and wood are pleasant things under certain circumstances. Determined never to say die, we drew up the table into the most sheltered corner, and used broken-down bed-tressels in lieu of chairs. Meat of some sort was forthcoming, but so unfit for human food, that even our hardened stomachs revolted at its sight. We contented ourselves, therefore, with bread and

water, and a cup of our own tea, and rolled ourselves in our rugs to await the dawn. There was no window in our bleak abode, so we had to judge of the approach of daylight by what came through the chinks of the door. At length our Arabs knocked us up, and met us with the welcome intelligence that all was ready for a start. Our road offered a picturesque aspect—groups of natives in the eternal white flowing robes, on mules clothed with gaily-striped rugs and luggage-tellis; a kid, or goat, or bunch of fowls slung over the high saddle-bow, on their way to market. A dignified and austere race, much belying their inner character. I have never seen any of them smile—always the same sombre expression; black, straight eyebrow, thin nose, and high cheek-bone; dark, rich-toned face, framed in the white haik that loosely drapes around it, allowing no hair to be seen, or neck; a thick yellowish burnous flapping in the wind; bare legs, and a large slipper-stirrup.

Five hours' ride brought us to the baths of Hammam-Meskhroutin, which lay a little out of our

road, but were well worthy the *détour*. Here we had settled to sleep, and go on the morrow to Quelma; but discovering that the bathing establishment was silent and untenanted, and that Quelma was only three hours distant, we determined to see what was to be seen, and eat what we could get, and go on in the course of the afternoon. The few who were about did not seem to care much about providing us with food. A great deal of persuasion on the part of the "thorn" at length produced a skinny fowl and a few eggs, which we devoured greedily, considering that our dinner of the day before had consisted only of bread and water.

This is a queer and an uncanny place. There are iron springs, and cascades of boiling water, that deposit masses of chalk and sulphur, rising and bubbling through the earth in all directions. The surrounding landscape is dreary and volcanic, and looked very shadowy indeed as we saw it, on account of the sirocco mist of sand—a species of simoom—which gave the appearance of everything being seen through crape. The whole of the little

plain on which the bathing houses are established is covered with ghostly cones about seven feet high, caused by the deposit from the hot springs, which increases in volume till it chokes the water, and compels it to disappear. The water then breaks itself another place a little further on, and the same game is played over and over again *ad infinitum*. There are myriads of these cones grouped in irregular crowds, which a very quiet imagination will transform into grisly phantoms, bowing to each other fantastically.

The Arab legend in connexion with them is so poetical, that I cannot resist inserting it here.

"Once on a time," says the legend, "there was a great chief who was the father of two children, beautiful as the day—a son and a daughter. These two loved each other tenderly, and could scarcely exist out of each other's sight. Now it came to pass that the old chief felt himself gradually sinking out of the world, and felt very anxious to see his first-born married and settled before joining the long procession of his ancestors; so he sent for his son, and said,

"'Son, I would see thee married; take unto thyself a houri, who may lie on thy bosom and be thine through life, that I may bless her before I die.'

"The young man looked fixedly at his father, and answered quietly,

"'Sir, there is but one houri whom I can wed, and that is my sister Amna; give her to me, I pray you, that we twain may be one flesh.'

"The old man recoiled in horror at the impious request, and turning on his son, cursed him aloud, and bade him seek another home, and see his face no more.

* * * * * * *

"One night the wind was high, and great clouds chased each other over the heavens, concealing the moon from view. Young Hamed mounted his snow-white camel, and leading another by the bridle, turned his face towards the encampment of his father, followed silently by a chosen band of brigands.

"'Amna, my darling,' he whispered softly,

'come and nestle under my burnous—the night is dark, and chosen well for flight.'

"Vainly old Kadour tore his hair, and cursed his sinful children. Vainly did rocks and hills re-echo to the paternal malediction—'May the holy Marabouts never pray over your tombs, accursed ones, and may screeching owls circle above your graves instead of cooing doves!'

"Hamed bore his love swiftly through the night, and celebrated his marriage feast close to the warm springs. Bacchanalian dancing and festive revelry were carried on, until the very elements, horror-struck at the extent of human depravity, took upon themselves to interfere. Fire rose through the earth, and the waters rushed from out their beds; thunder shook the earth, and lightning tore the sky. The supernatural storm subsided as suddenly as it began, and when the sky was clear once more, the whole of the wedding-party were found transformed to stone—an eternal monument of sin and retribution—destined to stand there for ever shedding boiling tears, as a memento of divine wrath and heavenly vengeance.

Stranger, fly the spot; at sundown every stone resumes its pristine form—the hellish festival begins afresh, and woe to the mortal who is present at the orgie! When daylight dawns he will have joined the throng of original victims." *

To return to realities. One cannot but be struck, in standing over these unearthly bubbling wells, with wonder as to their cause. Is the world's crust thinner at this spot than elsewhere? Are the inner fires very close under our feet? Involuntarily I lay my hand upon the ground, to feel if it is hot, and like to crack, and belch forth flames; but no—quite cold and damp it is, just covered with short thick grass, which tells of anything but fire. What force and impetus must these waters have to burst through the earth at will in this extraordinary manner, and in such immense quantities!

At one spot, on the brow of a hill, there are groups of boiling springs, which form a shallow lake, lined and surrounded with dazzlingly white

* This is evidently to account for the increase of cones as time goes on.

calcareous deposit. This little lake throws off sheets of vapour, that obscure the air, and rushes over a precipice lined with the same material. The whole thing—vapour, water, bright white rocks, and dark green olive-trees—has a startlingly bizarre effect, and irresistibly impresses the beholder with an idea of something unnatural and wrong. Arrived at the bottom of the fall, some eighty feet in height, the various jets unite, and form a boiling river about five feet wide. The number of sources in this place are almost unlimited, new ones incessantly rising up on the smallest attempt to turn up the soil. The grass in the neighbourhood is extremely rich and luxuriant, while trees and shrubs flourish tropically along the river's edge, a veritable oasis in this burnt-up country. It is reckoned that there are upwards of forty-two distinct sets of thermal waters in Algeria, of which those of Hammam-Meskhroutin are the most important, and after them those of Mers-el-Kebir, near Oran, and Hammam-Biban, in the vicinity of the Portes de Fer.

We reached Guelma by sunset. The entrance

into the town was extremely picturesque. A bright moon threw long black shadows across the road, whilst groups of Arab merchants and raisin-vendors sat cross-legged on the pavement, shouting out their wares, and calling the attention of passers-by to their multifarious array of goods, lit up by dim and flickering lanterns. Most of the houses have but one story, and are ranged in long wide streets, which gives a low appearance to the buildings.

Guelma is a town of 6,000 inhabitants, of which about 2,000 are colonists, and stands 916 feet above the level of the sea. It was the Calama of the Punic wars, and a fortress and depository for treasure in the days of Jugurtha. Now it occupies a high place in the cattle trade,* having been colonized in 1845, and would be in a more flourishing condition than it is, were there better means of communication with the sea.

In the public gardens facing the Hôtel D'Anvier (a very comfortable establishment, by the way)

* The following extract from a Government report, dated 1863, may be interesting, as showing the relative

are many statues and inscriptions, most of them taken from the ruins of the Roman city of Announa, which is situated at about six miles from Guelma, and which does not repay a visit—at least, so we were informed.

On our journey from Guelma to Bona, we had the satisfaction of realizing pretty much the feelings of the victims to the torture of the Middle Ages, known as the "Little Ease." The unfortunates condemned to that punishment were shut up in a tiny cell, wherein they could not take any position which is usual to the human frame, and were left there sometimes until they lost the use of their limbs through cramp. We were in much the same condition. The "thorn" had been duly

possessions in the way of cattle, &c., of natives and Europeans. On the 1st January, 1863,

The natives possessed—	The Europeans possessed—
2,000,000 oxen,	30,000 oxen,
7,000,000 sheep,	7,000 cows,
4,000,000 goats,	100,000 sheep,
130,000 horses,	80,000 goats,
100,000 mules,	20,000 pigs,
250,000 camels.	15,000 horses,
	10,000 mules,
	8,000 donkeys.

sent to book our places in the diligence, and great was our dismay on discovering that the banquette was utterly unfit for anything but creatures of Arab birth, being terribly small, and more wretched even than is usual in these unpleasant conveyances. Imagine two narrow wooden seats behind the driver, like knifeboards, each one intended for three persons, and possessing no backs, or attempt at comfort of any kind—over these seats a hood, so low as to render it a matter of extreme difficulty to reach one's place at all—and you will have some idea of the condition in which we were, after six hours' jolting over a rough road. It was impossible to sit upright, on account of the lowness of the roof, or to stretch our legs, because of the front seat, which broke our shins in two, whilst any attempt at leaning back was rendered impracticable by heaps of odoriferous and piled-up luggage of all sorts and shapes and descriptions. We had, therefore, to sit doubled up, with our knees knocked in our faces every now and again, or our heads rapped against the roof, by some sudden lurch, holding

on to a bar the while to avoid being precipitated on to the floor by the bumping of the "convenience!" The wind was bitter cold, blown across the snow-mountains, and cut us through and through, besides almost upsetting the diligence, whenever it was caught broadside, by its truly tropical violence. Rain soon came down in sheets (the first rain since we left Algiers), and wet us thoroughly, dripping into puddles that iced our feet, and drifting down my back through a hole in the leather. Soon two hot, moist countrywomen got up and occupied the seats in front of us, keeping out alike view and air, and disseminating noxious gases from their reeking and perspiring forms! What with jolting, and what with bad packing, the corner of a deal-box came down and lodged in the small of my back, where it remained, for I was too much frozen with cold and broken with my position to resist any incursions on the part of the luggage.

Thus we travelled on by interminable straight roads between misty hills, and just caught a glimpse of the Lake of Fetzara looming through the

clouds. It is the largest lake in North Africa, being upwards of seven miles in length, and is the home of myriads of aquatic birds. A lucrative trade in grebes was carried on in the tenth century by the natives who lived beside its waters. At length we drove into the large square of Bona, one of the sides of which is occupied by a handsome mosque, sheltered by a grove of palms and bananas. Upon being asked to descend we found it quite impossible, and eventually had to be assisted to the ground by the tender hands of dirty beggars. Some hot brandy and water, however, soon began the restoration of our energies, which was completed by dry clothes, a cheery fire, and a good dinner.

Bona is not an inviting place, or an interesting one, as it has lost nearly all its Eastern peculiarities. It is possessed of a commerce of about six million francs per annum, in wax, wool, crops, and mules. It can boast, too, of a tobacco as well as of a soap manufactory, and of a population of over twelve thousand inhabitants, so that it may be put down as one of the most important towns along the north coast.

The shores between Bona and La Calle are the scene of the great coral fisheries, which give occupation annually to about 180 boats, most of them belonging to Naples. The French had a monopoly of the coral trade from the end of the fourteenth century until 1830, with few interruptions. It is now done almost entirely by foreigners, chiefly Tuscans and Neapolitans. These people do no good to the town, as they bring their maccaroni and dried provisions from Italy, and live, sleep, and work exclusively on board their boats. In fine weather they put out to sea, and fish at a depth of from thirty to eighty metres. For this purpose they run before the wind, with a purse-like net attached to the boat, at the required depth, by cords at prow and stern. In front of these nets hang large stones fastened to long sticks, which knock the coral from its resting-place, whereupon it is immediately caught up in the attendant nets and ropes. A Government brig is always in attendance on these occasions, to prevent the use of iron implements, which are supposed to mutilate the rocks too much.

The coral-polypi are small insects, somewhat resembling a starfish, white, soft, and semi-transparent. They are multiplied by means of tiny eggs, which, on leaving the bodies of the older animals, adhere to that on which they fall. As soon as the cell that contains the egg opens, little ramifications begin to show themselves, and gradually assume the consistency of coral. The polypi are constantly changing their habitations, and as they do so the coral acquires size, hardness, and weight. The tubes that form its covering are yellowish in colour, and are removed by means of vinegar or spirits of nitre, after which the inner substance is polished with emery and white of egg into the condition in which we see it. The best branches of coral average about a foot in length, and an inch and a half in thickness. None of it penetrates into France until it has passed through the Neapolitan market.

Every fishing-barque pays to the French Government eight hundred francs a year, and every barque brings to the surface on an average four cwts. of coral during the season. The fisheries

are calculated to bring in an income of three million francs per annum.

We took a drive into the country in the direction of the snow mountains; and half an hour's journey through hedges of cactus and olive plantations brought us to the hill of Hippo, celebrated as the burial-place of St. Augustine. That father of the Church was bishop of this district for thirty-five years, and here much of his ministry was carried on. His tomb is marked by a marble altar surmounted by a statuette, not in the best taste, of the saint himself. We sat on its steps, and contemplated the prospect. Behind us, snowy hills, and woods of juniper, much infested with lions; in front of us, an undulating range of low hills, stretching into the far distance in the form of a bay; to the left the town of Bona, its white houses well relieved against the ominous black clouds sweeping to the west. The whole landscape was monotonously grey and uniform, from the profusion of olive-trees all over the land which spreads towards the shore. A little below us there were Roman remains—a large aqueduct and baths—peeping

from among the trees; rather unsatisfactory remains, as we failed to pick up any definite intelligence concerning them.

The idea now took us to go and see the grottoes spoken of as existing at about six miles distance on the other side of the town. The drive was a pleasant one, as the whole of the district is exceedingly fertile, and the glimpses of the bay are charming. We jolted along over a mountain road, nearly upset every now and then by the dwarf-palm bushes that clothe every uncultivated spot about the hills, and, in course of time, were told to get out and see the grottoes—a delusion and a snare—though the view from the top of the mountain repays any amount of trouble. I sat on the heap of stones which forms its apex, and looked down on the sea, that dashed itself into foam on three sides of me. The whole thing reminded me strongly of some iron-bound Scotch coast, the colouring was so violet and blue, and *modified by haze*, which forms so essential a part, to my thinking, of Scottish scenery, but which is so little seen in this bright and burning country. I gave myself up to

pleasant day-dreams while watching the sea-gulls dipping in the distant waves, and counting the many capes and inlets that spread so far away, until becoming conscious of the flight of time, I scrambled down the crags, and found my companions meditating, in much the same dreamy condition as myself, over the glassiness of the green gulfs and bays plashing quietly on the sunlit rocks. We were suddenly recalled to a painful sense of the truth of the saying that "all that's bright must fade," by one of the dreadful African showers that come on so suddenly. The sky was clouded over before we had time to notice it, and big drops began to fall, followed by a rushing wind and perfect sheets of water. On these occasions it is not of the slightest use putting on a mackintosh, as the rain, when it does come, penetrates everything in a few seconds. We ran for it, and were fortunate to obtain shelter in one of the despised grottoes, where we were not long detained, for the shower was over as suddenly as it began.

A little boat took us out into the middle of the harbour, where the good ship *Sinai* was lying,

bound for Tunis, just as the Ramadan evening gun boomed across the bay—the gun which announces to the faithful that fasting is over for that day, and that the orgies of the night may commence.

The Ramadan is the great fast of the Mussulman religion, and lasts during a whole month. During the day-time, so long as the appointed period runs, no food must touch the lips of the faithful; but no sooner has the sun sunk behind the hills, than they make up for lost time by indulging in every sort of wild debauch, eating and drinking and singing, until the light of dawn brings with it the same routine.

Fasting is considered among the Arabs as the most meritorious of all acts in the sight of heaven. They divide it under three distinct heads—the fast *expiatory*, to pay penalty for faults voluntarily committed; the fast *votive*, an act of extra and unnecessary devotion; and the fast *supererogatory*, or continued beyond the limits prescribed by law. The one, however, that is kept with most devotion is that of the Ramadan. It com-

mences, as I have said, at dawn, and ends at sunset, for the space of one month, and during that time the true believer is forbidden to smoke or take snuff, over and above abstinence from food and drink. He is forbidden even to touch voluntarily a drop of rain-water, or to smell the perfume of a flower. Travellers, sick people, and pregnant women are freed from the penance, on condition that the required time is made up on some future occasion.

The exact moment of sunrise and sundown is proclaimed by the muezzins from the tops of the mosques, and in large towns by a cannot-shot, which is regularly and complaisantly fired by the despised "Christian dogs." It is a curious fact that seditions and revolts break out oftener in this month than in any other, partly because the mind through the body is irritated by prolonged abstinence, and partly because even the most wicked are carried away by some sort of spirit of fanaticism at a time when everyone becomes ostentatiously devout. During the holy month all mosques are kept open through the night, for the

benefit of the elect, and a very picturesque appearance they present, lit with multitudes of lamps, and hung with wreaths and garlands.

The Ramadan is brought to a brilliant conclusion with the fête of the Beyram, which lasts two or three days. Great sacrifices are made of sheep and oxen, whose flesh comes in most opportunely for a general dinner of rejoicing. Mahomet was clever in the formation of his laws, for every religious rite prescribed by him is followed by some material advantage, so that all the ceremonies ordained in the Koran may in the end accord with the character and tastes of his proselytes. His theology is founded to a great extent on fundamental Christian truths, the great difference between the two religions being that while the arm of Mahometanism is a bloody sword, that of Christianity is gentle persuasion. He speaks of the unity of God, and the necessity of loving him; of the resurrection of the dead, and of punishment and reward hereafter. Mahomet recognises Christ, moreover, as a great preacher, but not as the Son of God. Our adoration of the Trinity,

and the interceding power of the saints, as recognised in some phases of Christianity, cause all Christians to be mixed up in the Mussulman mind with idolaters. Finally, he adds, on his own account, that God, willing to save His people from the darkness of unbelief, sent him, Mahomet, to teach them the way they should go. He further preaches the doctrine of predestination, and then, turning from prophet into legislator, he proceeds to lay down the code of laws which have governed all Mahometans for the space of twelve centuries.

As regards the external practices of his religion, he commands the use of the rites of circumcision, of almsgiving, of frequent ablution, and of prayer five times a day. He ordains, besides, a total abstinence from fermented liquors, from blood, and from pork; the keeping of the Ramadan, and the sanctification of Friday.

To dispose people towards his doctrine, he promises to the elect a place in the seventh heaven, and a harem of seventy-two seductive houris. A reformer who turns heaven into a seraglio, could

not fail to make proselytes in a country whose climate inspires voluptuousness.

The intelligent law-giver judged it wise to pander a little to the ancient pagan customs of the East, and to the meditative disposition of the Oriental mind. He accordingly preserved the usage of a pilgrimage to Mecca, which, says Mussulman tradition, can be traced from the Deluge; and he even thought it prudent to make this one of the four chief points of his religion.

The feast of the Beyram, which seems to have something in common with the immolation of the pascal lamb, bears in reality no analogy to it. It corresponds exactly with the ceremonies of Mecca, the holocaust coinciding with the last rite in the valley of Monna, where the pilgrims assist at the sacrifice of propitiatory victims.

While on this subject, it may be well to say a few words of the Sacraments of the Arab religion, namely, marriage and burial.

In the *douars*, or little villages, where women labour in the fields without veil and half nude, the Arab is able to form some idea of his future

bride; but in the towns, where they go about with everything covered but the eyes, he knows absolutely nothing of his lady-love until the day after the wedding. If an Arab meets a young lady in the streets whose grace or flashing eyes betoken that she is beautiful, he begins by bribing the negress who accompanies her in her daily visit to the baths, and if his presents are accepted, demands of the father his daughter's hand. Supposing him to be rich, the suitor is nearly always accepted; for not only have Arab girls no fortune, but must even be bought with a price paid to the parents. In the case of a rich daughter of the tents, a contract is usually signed by which her husband pledges himself not to make her work, to buy her each year a certain number of bracelets and gay clothing, and not to beat her, *except under certain circumstances*, &c. The marriage is then concluded before the Kadi, sometimes in the absence of the bride. Often, indeed, the father marries off his daughter, more especially if he be in want of money, without her knowing anything about it until after the fatal knot is tied! A

divorce is very easily obtained, by merely applying to the Kadi for it. Before the French occupation it was legal to kill an adulterous wife; but now there is nothing for it but the divorce. Arab girls are married and become mothers at a very early age—sometimes as early as thirteen or fourteen. The population would be very great, were the children taken care of; but they are restricted, in the way of clothing, to an amulet tied round the neck by a string, until such time as they can walk, and then receive only a cotton shirt, sometimes spend their early life lying naked in the puddles, and consequently die in great numbers.

The Arab wife has, as a natural result of her degraded position, very little delicacy, and no modesty whatever. She admires only that which is violent and energetic. Thus the best way to please her would be to penetrate, by stratagem or otherwise, under her tent awning, and make love to her by the side of her sleeping husband. But were the husband to wake and kill his rival, she would not be sorry—her admiration would only be turned into another channel.

When the future bride and bridegroom go to clinch their marriage before the Kadi, they are usually led in procession by their friends. The lady is carried in a litter, surrounded by women bearing torches and beating cymbals. The husband is then conducted to the tent of his wife by a band of relations, who hold the bridle of his horse, his own head being wrapped in a burnous. What is the meaning of this extraordinary custom?—Does it refer to the retired life of Arab wives?—does it allude to the blindness of the man who marries without seeing, and consents to be guided by the advice of others? It must originally have had some meaning—what other can there be?

Arab burials are conducted with calm and noise—that is to say, that the men are, as usual, grave and silent, while the women conduct themselves after the manner of an Irish wake. In towns the body is carried on a bed, covered over with some gay silk drapery; in the country it is simply wrapped in its burnous, and thrown across a horse's saddle, the face remaining uncovered.

Men go in front, reciting snatches of the Koran, and women follow behind, scratching their arms and faces in honour of the Manes of the dead. Arrived at the cemetery, the body is promptly buried, for the Arabs believe that it suffers until it reposes in the tomb; it is placed resting on the left elbow, in order to facilitate its rise on the sound of the last trump.

Arab burial-grounds are simple affairs, consisting usually of an open space around the grave of some Marabout or holy man. In some places the tombs are lined with flat stones, to save the corpses from the attack of the hyena and the jackal.

PART II.

Tunis.

CHAPTER IX.

TUNIS.

WE expected much enjoyment from the novelty and thorough change which Tunis is supposed to present to the newly-arrived traveller; nor were we disappointed. It is as yet a *terra incognita* to the tourist; a spot fully a thousand years behind all its neighbours in progress and civilization; a phenomenon, bordering, as it does, on the very skirts of refined Europe.

Very early in the morning we tumbled out of our berths and went on deck, having been much tossed about during the night, and found ourselves already anchored in the bay, a large and spreading bay, with mountains on three sides of us in the dim distance, strangely shaped, wildly peaked, and seemingly of great height. Towards the open

sea we caught a glimpse, through the morning haze, of little detached islets rising sheer out of the water some two hundred feet high, and casting long straight shadows over the now placid waves. On the shore nearest to us lay a stretch of low white fortifications, bleak and blind, with no visible opening save narrow slits in the wall at intervals. This was the fort of La Goulette, which is supposed to protect the town from danger, although an ordinary man-of-war could easily batter the whole thing down in about five minutes.

Tunis itself is situated five miles inland, separated by a salt-water lagoon from its port and douane. The latter (a charming specimen of a "public building") is placed on the little tumbledown jetty of La Goulette, and consists of two little ruined huts, only one shade more "little" and more "tumbledown" than the jetty itself. All merchandise is carried through the formalities of this delightfully innocent administration immediately on landing, and is thence transferred by means of mules and camels to the depôt in the

town. Accidents frequently happen during the short transit. A portion of the goods either gets spirited away, or arrives at its destination after a bath in the lake! This sounds exaggerated, I daresay, but it is simple fact, and is only on a par with everything else in the wonderful Regency of Tunis. All that is connected with the douane is carried on with admirable simplicity. Although Tunis is in commercial relation with Spain, France, Sicily, Italy, Malta, Constantinople, &c., &c., there are but eight functionaries in connection with the Custom-house. How superior must a system be that is based on such patriarchal principles to the bureaucratic complications of European countries, which consider themselves more civilized than the African States!

In course of time we were pounced upon by a boatman, and carried off to the above-mentioned jetty, threading our intricate way through a host of gaily-painted barges and fishing-boats, that reflected themselves glassily in the bright green water. I was at first more struck with the water than anything else, so vivid was it in its bright-

ness and clearness, dazzlingly so, only to be described by the French word "*eclatant!*" Once fairly landed, I might well say that I remember no more, as I was too dazed by the sudden change in everything to be capable of taking in any new sensations. It became a sort of struggle for life or death, and we struck out right and left with sticks and umbrellas at the swarm of harpies who would fain have devoured us alive. A strange and bewildering scene, truly! Hundreds of jabbering men, shouting, tearing, shrieking, and gesticulating; one dragging us by the coat, another seizing us by the trowsers, a third taking forcible possession of my camp-stool, regardless of all recognized rules of private property. Every sort or kind of motley costume; a perfect Babel of every tongue under Heaven; beggars from Palermo, Lazzaroni from Naples, Turks, Jews, and Infidels of all classes and denominations, all eagerly bent on "doing" the Englishman. They wrested our baggage from us, and bore it about triumphantly in different directions, until caught and brought back by others of the same cloth, and we

were several times nearly pushed into the sea in our attempts to reclaim our possessions. Order there was none. The douane officials and soldiers were quite as bad as any of the rest; the former, indeed, utterly refused to perform their office of searching until properly mollified by a silver fee.

The examination at last gone through, the hustling recommenced with renewed vigour, and we were finally dragged off, amid bewildering clatter, through crumbling arches and pools of fetid mud, to an open space, where a range of really decent close carriages was drawn up—all of them close carriages, as none but the Bey and the Consuls are allowed uncovered calèches in this singular place. We were now told that we were at La Goulette, a full hour and a half's drive from Tunis, a fact which hitherto we had not realized; and accordingly depositing ourselves in the first vehicle at hand, we commenced bargaining about the price.

Now the fray began afresh. We were bundled out of the carriage in which we sat, a chorus of drivers tearing at our things, and shouting their

fares in our ears. We were all hoarse with trying to make ourselves heard, and Hamoud, our "thorn," positively rose to the occasion, swinging a bundle of rugs round his turbaned head, and actually upsetting a row of gesticulating beggars, like so many nine-pins, with my favourite carpet-bag! Fortunately there is an end to all things, and at length we got quit of the howling throng, and started off with a dash. Away we went, swaying over the uneven ground of arid sand, splashing now and then through the waters of the marshy lake, now through a wood of stunted, blasted olives cut out against the jagged blue hills, now past a herd of camels browsing peaceably by the water's edge, and at last caught sight across the plain of the flat white houses and glittering gold minarets of λευκοη Τυνητα—"Tunis the white," as it was christened by Diodorus of Sicily. A queer low archway admitted us into the town, the entrance into which is far from imposing. A series of straggling suburban streets, low and white, and flat-roofed; a crowd of bawling people in every variety of brightly-coloured costume;

carts and camels blocking the way, while their owners were squabbling between; a horse being shod in the centre of the road, and a cart overturned in the mud. Such were the *contretemps* which delayed our progress.

At last the streets widened into a sort of uncertain square, choked with booths and resting camels, at the end of which stood the real entrance to the town, a picturesque arch. Through it we caught a vista of white buildings and brilliant minarets, with here and there a palm, cool against the turquoise sky, while groups of promenaders were wandering about in all the brilliant dresses for which Tunis is celebrated.

The Hôtel de France is uninviting as to its exterior, bearing the aspect more of a ruin than a dwelling-house, but it is comfortable enough inside. It is an old Moorish dwelling, with central-hall, all walled with coloured tiles, the bedrooms opening on a gallery above. Not being as yet acclimatized to the strange costumes of the place, I was rather startled at the appearance of the housemaid, who was busy over towels. She wore a pair

of white linen trowsers fitting tightly to the leg, a short shirt of some bright stuff reaching loosely a little below the waist, and a veil of gauze wrapped round the head, and falling in great folds down her back. I wonder what our English housemaids would say if asked to dress like that! Close to my room door was a winding stair, that led out on to the roof, a favourite resort in Eastern climates. From thence I obtained a good view of the town, bristling with metal-roofed minarets, that sparkled like so many spear-heads in the sunlight. That one which belongs to the Great Mosque towers high above the rest, and looks at night like a fairy turret, its delicate tracery being lit up with a multitude of coloured lamps.

In the days of the Romans the Regency of Tunis was divided into four provinces, but now two divisions only are recognised—two grand divisions, which divide the country into two equal parts, that of the *summer* and that of the *winter*. They are so called because each is regularly visited during the season whose name it bears by

the Bey, who makes an annual progress, surrounded by a small army of cavalry, to collect the taxes in person. The two divisions together cover an area of six thousand square leagues, and maintain a population of upwards of three million inhabitants—Moors, Turks, Arabs, Jews, and Negroes. The southern portion of the kingdom is for the most part mountainous, with here and there a sterile and deserted spot; while the northern district is well watered and fertile, producing all kinds of crops and fruits. All sorts of animals, too, abound, both savage and domestic.

The *summer* division is more thickly populated than the other one, being rich in towns and douars, and possessing, moreover, a much greater wealth of ancient Roman remains.

As to climate, the residents of Tunis declare it to be perfection. It is never too hot in summer, as there is a wind, or, rather, a freshness in the air, emanating from the sea; while in winter, snow is scarcely ever known to fall. At the time of our visit, however, there was much fear of famine, from the excessive drought. Wheat and other

crops were at extravagant prices—twice what they are usually in England, and, consequently, eight times more than they should be here. The cattle were dying from lack of nourishment, and the corn was already burnt up underground. As the chief exports consist of grain and cattle, there is nothing left for the unfortunate people, when these fail, but hunger and starvation. The primary cause of the calamity at the period of which I speak, may be traced, however, in a great degree, to Government maladministration. The most important tax is the tenth part of the crops. The Bey sends round commissioners to value them, and they act according to the amount of bribe they receive from the farmer. If he gives them nothing, they value his field at, we will say, six pounds, whereas its real value is not more than two. Thus the tax, with its attendant expenses, swallows up the entire produce—which calamity, in its turn, results in another. The farmer throws aside his plough in disgust, and taking his gun, lies in wait for the traveller, on the principle that "man must live somehow;" and this is the reason why it is utterly

impracticable for a tourist to penetrate into the country much beyond the outskirts of the capital. The whole nation is one of robbers, from the Bey downwards; and, thus, in all dealings with the natives, fear is the only means by which to move them. If you treat them with consideration, they despise you; and the more you endeavour to act as towards a fellow human being, the greater fool they take you to be. As long as you are his guest, the native of Tunis (like his brother of Algeria) will be hospitable to you; but once beyond his border, he is as likely as not to shoot you in the back for the sake of a brass button, value one sou. A French vessel was wrecked not long since on the rocky coast, and the natives seized the unfortunate survivors, and robbing them of everything they possessed, turned them away naked.

Every facility seems to be spread out by the devil, like the meshes of a net, for the continual retrogression of this people. When the countryman gets weary of oppression, and sickened of his farm, he has only to make a pilgrimage towards

the coast, and there he finds a regular system of small Maltese traders, who immediately buy up his stock at a nominal value, and supply him with arms and ammunition. Thus freed from his responsibilities, as well as from his incumbrances, he quietly shoulders his gun, and takes to "the road," until such time as he shall have a fancy to resume bucolic life. When this period arrives, he purchases the farm and appurtenances of one about to abandon business, and begins the wheel of routine once more—a queer wheel of fortune, in sooth, which turns out highwaymen and agriculturists at each alternate revolution! The law of morality seems to resolve itself, like that of Sparta, into "not being found out." Robbery does not carry with it the shame that it deserves. If a man is convicted, he buys his discharge; if he cannot do so, the worse for him—he passes to the galleys, and when his time of probation is at an end, resumes his status in society, having only been "unfortunate."

The punishment of death is awarded for very slight misdemeanours, according to the temper

of the Bey. There is a public execution of five or six people every Saturday in the grand square, in the natural course of events. In cases of murder (as, indeed, in all other crimes) the Bey takes no cognizance until forced to do so. If a man is killed, his relations pursue the murderer. Having caught him, they bring him before the Bey, with witnesses to prove that some one saw the deed done. Having examined the evidence, the Bey condemns the criminal to decapitation. The murderer, if he be a rich man, "buys his blood"—that is to say, he pays a large sum in money, or in produce, into the royal coffers. If he fails to do so, it is all up with him, and justice is thenceforth inexorable. This is a great source of revenue to His Highness, and it is further increased by a little innocent deception of his lieges. He sends forth from his mint a copper currency, with an edict that it shall pass for, we will say, ten times its value, on the understanding, of course, that it shall eventually return whence it came at the same valuation. When it is all out, he repents him of what he has done,

and issues another proclamation, stating that, in consequence of petitions to that effect, he has settled to reduce the coinage to its real value, "in order that none of his children shall suffer through his means," and accordingly he takes it back again, only paying a tenth part of what he got for it!

He sets a brilliant example of evil-doing by never discharging his own liabilities. The banker whom we visited showed us heaps of his notes of hand (or, rather, notes of *seal*, as Oriental potentates always use a stamp instead of signing their names). These documents are only so much waste-paper, for the last lot before this one has never yet been paid. He has money, but will not part with it.

Only the other day an occurrence took place at Malta, which I think worthy of being recorded. His Highness is in the habit of buying corn at Malta, and, as usual, of never paying for it. He accordingly sent his vessels on their accustomed trip, dreaming no evil. Arrived at their destination, they were seized by his creditors, who

refused to give them up until he should send the money he owed. In vain he stormed and swore (for he only possesses some half-a-dozen altogether), but at last was obliged to give in, as the only way of getting back his tiny fleet.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that His Royal Highness, the Bey of Tunis, is an autocrat of the very first water. "L'état, c'est moi" is his motto, and brute force the order of the day. His Excellency's principles are sometimes, however, made to recoil on his own august head. A case in point occurred during our short stay in his capital.

The Spanish Consul took a certain Jewish family under his protection against the extortions of Government. The officials came down and claimed the man. The Consul refused to give him up, and the result was a quarrel. The Spaniard threatened to send for a vessel of war to defend the cause of the oppressed (a novel position for Spain, by the way), and the Bey, as the weaker vessel, was forced to yield.

Army and navy there are none to speak of.

Eight ships are all that are to the fore, and those of the worst possible description. As to the soldiers, I shall have to speak of them further on.

The Kingship, or, rather, Regency of Tunis, was formerly elective, like that of Tripoli, but is now hereditary. It is not necessarily the son of the sovereign who succeeds him; it is the eldest male relative that becomes Bey, whether brother, son, or cousin. If there should happen to be no nearer relation than a second cousin, then the people have a right to choose their master; but civil war has usually settled the question, might becoming right.

The Sublime Porte considers the Bey of Tunis his principal feudatory. That personage, however, pays no regular annual sum into the Sublime coffers, but sends ordinarily a valuable present in specie to his cousin the Sultan every three years. If the gift be omitted he falls into disgrace, and receives no firman or kaftan until such time as the fault shall have been duly repaired.

The firman is a yearly letter of congratulation, confirming the primary title of nomination, and

emanates directly from the Imperial throne; and the kaftan is a robe of honour, presented to the Bey in solemn audience by an envoy extraordinary from the Porte.

The reception of this mark of favour from the Grand Signior is the signal for great rejoicings in the Regency, and of great joy at the Court of the Bey, who prepares a series of fêtes for the ambassador.

All this outward show is merely nominal, as the Porte holds no power whatever over that which takes place at Tunis, and the Bey becomes, after all, the absolutely supreme chief of the whole Pachalic, the administrator of public revenues, the only judge in all causes, and the sole lord of the lives and bodies of his subjects. It is he who sways by his own authority every branch of Government, who sees after the collecting of the taxes, and exercises surveillance over every functionary in the land; it is he who conducts diplomatic relations, and even watches the private life of his people.

It would be impossible in Europe even to con-

ceive the gathering of so many strings into a single hand. Where a European prince would find himself in need of a hundred assistants, the Bey of Tunis considers six clerks more than sufficient for the purpose. When the machinery of Government is reduced to such Arcadian simplicity as this, it may be well imagined what celerity will be attained in the conduct of affairs, what economy will be arrived at in positive administration, and with what facility abuses will be removed in the operations of so uncomplicated an organization—if the prime mover be a clear-headed and honest man.

The present one, unfortunately, is not all that could be desired—being stigmatized by his own subjects (under their breath, of course,) as a liar and a swindler; but former Beys have shown, from time to time, what might be done with the country by wise rulers, even while retaining the ultra-autocratic system of Government. It seems to suit the people, and grow in their blood, so to speak, and hoary men among them only shake their heads over the misdoings of their present

lord, not at all blaming the principles of administration. They quote the Bey Hamouda, who died in 1814, after a peaceful reign of thirty years, as their *beau-ideal* of a monarch, and it certainly appears that under him everything went remarkably well.

Without ever having been initiated in the mysteries of jurisprudence, the Bey finds himself sovereign judge, not only of important causes, but also of the smallest differences which may chance to arise among his subjects. He takes his seat at eight o'clock every morning, and listens till twelve to all causes brought before him, giving in each case a judgment from which there is no appeal. In the more thorny cases he stops the pleaders in the midst of their discourse, proroguing them till another day in order to consult with men of law upon the subject; but more commonly he knocks over a cause with the rapidity of clockwork. Indeed, a European tribunal would find difficulty in deciding in a month on as many verdicts as His Highness gets through in a single morning. Although expeditious, he listens to the cases while

they are going on. It must be admitted that he is just and equitable, and even very upright where his own interests do not urge him in a contrary direction. He shows penetration and perspicacity when he chooses, making common sense on many occasions take the place of the learning which he does not possess.

It may be amusing to cite some examples of his judgments, both as exemplifying the spirit of the nation, and as shewing the naïve simplicity of his decrees.

A certain Moor lost his purse one day, containing sundry gold pieces or sequins. Desirous of recovering it, he proclaimed his mishap by means of the good offices of the town-crier. The person who had found it was an upright man, conspicuous for his probity, and the moment he discovered to whom it belonged, he made haste to restore it to its rightful owner; but the latter, finding that he had to do with a rich man, thought it a good opportunity for a little illicit gain at the expense of him who had so conscientiously restored it. He therefore maintained that there were eighty

sequins missing out of the purse in question, and violently insisted on their restitution. The quarrel became uproarious, and of course was referred to the decision of the Bey.

One man declared that the purse originally contained a hundred sequins, whilst his adversary affirmed with many oaths that he had given it back just as he found it.

As both assertions bore the same aspect of probability, the Bey was for a moment embarrassed as to his decision. He asked, however, to see the purse, and having examined it attentively, withdrew from it the money it contained, ordering, at the same time, that another hundred sequins be brought from his own treasury. He tried to put them into the purse, which, however, would only contain about fifty; then emptying it afresh, he invited the prosecutor to try his hand at it, and fill it with the hundred sequins which he had sworn it originally to enclose. Of course he was unable to do so; and the Bey, handing the purse and the sequins to the defendant, said—"You had better take possession of it, as it does not an-

swer the description given of it." The false accuser received two hundred blows from the bastinado.

It is notorious that all attempts at intrigue with Mussulman ladies are surrounded with many dangers. The following anecdote told me by a Tunisian greybeard almost reminds one of Boccaccio:—

"A gentleman of Tunis had a young and lovely wife, which happy state of things did not, however, prevent his having a clandestine passion for a charming widow who was his neighbour. The latter became jealous of her lover's wife, and so spied into the affairs of her rival, that she at length discovered the existence of an opposition love affair between that lady and a young and handsome Jewish merchant. Of course she made all haste to inform her lover of the discovery, but he utterly refused to believe in his wife's unfaithfulness until such proofs were brought before him as would have convicted a millstone.

One day, then, advertised of course by the treacherous widow, he returned home unexpectedly,

in order to surprise the guilty pair. But he found his wife alone, weeping over his neglect, a perfect Diana of chastity—a Niobe all tears. He sought throughout the house in vain, and convinced of her innocence, mingled his tears with hers—and returned to his charming widow. The latter reflected, and chewed the cud of mortification, until at last she cried out,

"Did you examine the great cupboard of your wife—the heirloom chest that contains her gewgaws and her finery?"

"No, I didn't."

"Go, then; 'tis there you will find her lover."

He rushed home again forthwith, tore up the steps, and demanded the key of the coffer; which was at first obstinately refused to him, and only ultimately obtained by violence. He opened it, and sure enough there the gentleman was concealed, under sundry shawls and gowns. He turned the key again with all dispatch, and, locking up the lady in her chamber, ran to claim justice of the Bey against the miracle of frailty who called herself his wife.

Whilst the outraged husband was fuming over his revenge, his wife was not inactive. She escaped from her prison by means of a window looking on to the roof, and making use of a master-key, set her accomplice at liberty with all speed. On his way to the palace, the Moor had of course told the widow of the success of his research, and she, delighted to fill up the cup of her rival's humiliation, hastened to knock at her door, under the pretext of consoling her distress, asking her all sorts of questions as to the details of the quarrel. The wife admitted nothing, feigning not to understand what the other was talking about.

"How!" cried the widow, out of all patience, "do you mean to tell me that your husband did not find a lover in your apartment?"

"How could he do so, dear, when there is not in the whole house a corner that would offer a safe retreat?"

"Well—but that coffer——"

"Would it hold a man, do you think?"

"Of course it would; why, I could hide in it myself with ease, dress and all."

"Impossible."

"Nonsense—you will see."

And the widow skipped into the chest with great agility and quickness. With fully equal quickness, however, the lid fell upon her, and the key turned twice in the lock, to make assurance doubly sure.

The wife immediately returned to her prison, and at the same moment her husband arrived at the corner of the street, with a posse of soldiers at his heels. They shouldered the coffer without a word, and taking with them the accused, directed their steps to the council-chamber, where the Bey was already awaiting them. The Moor commenced a long harangue, and detailed at length his griefs, and at the end of it the chest was opened, by the orders of the judge. The situation must have been charming, when, instead of a gay Lothario, a blushing and embarrassed woman struggled out from among the draperies, taking to her heels, dishevelled and confused, amid the laughter of the populace. The Bey laughed too, while the crowd hooted, but fearful lest the dignity of justice

should be offended, he ordered the luckless Moor two or three hundred cuts of the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Not at all satisfied that his eyes had deceived him, the Moor continued narrowly to observe the goings-on of his wife, and at last discovered her flirting with her lover down a neighbouring blind-alley. Now, the Mahometan laws as to feminine dereliction are absurdly severe, and once more brought up before the tribunal, she was sentenced to transportation to the Isle of Kerkanah, whilst her lover received fifty blows on the soles of his feet, and six months of the galleys; the entire judgment set aside, as usual, by a heavy payment into the Royal coffers.

The Island of Kerkanah is an absolutely desolate and sterile spot, inhabited only by fishermen and convicts—a sort of miniature Botany Bay. All the unfortunate prisoners receive at the hands of the Bey is a small modicum of bread; but fish, being very plentiful, affords them ample subsistence; although cases are on record in which poor creatures have died there of starvation,

through inability to provide themselves with nourishment.

The wives of rich men have been sent to Kerkanah without trial whatever, merely at the request of their husbands; though all who have any money can be certain of being able to purchase their discharge, however awful the crime committed. Heads sometimes take the place of purses on these occasions, and free their owners from the difficulties of incarceration.

The "dames légères" are a class totally distinct from all other ladies at Tunis, and are celebrated for their *finesse;* they were so even in Roman times—at least, so sings Juvenal:—

> "Forsitan exspectes ut Gaditana canoro
> Incipiat prurire choro, plausuque probata,
> Ad terram tremulo descendat rene puella,
> Irritamentum Veneris languentis, et acres
> Divitis urticæ . . . ."

Not long ago there was one of these public singers who applied for a passport to permit of her going to Constantine in the colony of Algeria. The permission was refused, but she nevertheless attempted to go thither in spite of the refusal.

Caught and brought back before she had reached the frontier, she was condemned to a few months at Kerkanah, and was confided for that purpose to the care of two soldiers. She was young and pretty, and made sufficiently free with her gaolers to insure herself every comfort on the journey. The soldiers arrived with their charge after a couple of days' march as far as Soussah, and, thinking themselves far enough away from home surveillance to give way with impunity to their projects of jollification, procured a sufficient supply of wine and spirits. As their prisoner was chained to them by an arm and a leg, they gave themselves up to excessive intoxication without any fear of evil consequences. Her bonds were sufficiently light, and her chain sufficiently long to allow of her joining in the proposed orgie, and she soon feigned a stupor of drunkenness, which was admirably assumed, and led them to drink all the deeper, until they finally gave way, and sunk hopelessly under the table. Taking advantage of a favourable moment, she possessed herself of the key that fastened her padlock, and

adroitly using it to knit together her conductors, by winding the chains round and round their bodies, she left them to their fate, carrying off their arms and the warrant for her detention.

Notwithstanding their amorous advances to her, they had not neglected to appropriate all the little gold ornaments and sequins with which the Oriental women of her profession adorn their long tresses; neither did she forget before taking to flight to rob them of their purses and such other valuables as she could lay her hands on. The soldiers remained insensible for many hours, and finally woke up in the middle of the night. The first who regained his senses, finding himself held tightly by something, and being still somewhat woolly as to the intellect, imagined himself the object of an attack, and rained down a perfect hail of blows upon the man that he thought was holding him. Wakened brusquely by this aggression, the other sought in vain for his poniard, and death would probably have been the result, had not the lady carried off their arms.

They fought long and fiercely, however, in the

dark, tearing each other's hair, and wounding one another cruelly with their nails, and were only separated at last by the intervention of the local authorities. Finding them thus tied together, unarmed, and without passport, it was but natural that their story should be disbelieved, and that they should be taken for escaped convicts. They were therefore hawked about, in spite of all remonstrance, from prison to prison, but being recognized nowhere, were brought up before the tribunal of the Bey. That prince laughed heartily at the comedy of errors, but condemned the actors in it, notwithstanding, to two hundred blows of the bastinado.

Every discussion in this country, every complaint, every quarrel, invariably ends in a fine and the bastinado. In a few cases, indeed, blows have been distributed evenly between the contending parties, in accordance with the Moorish proverb, which has become an axiom in jurisprudence, "Beat the innocent to force a confession from the guilty." Whether this strange method of procedure be found to succeed or no, I am unable to

say, but the following story is told in proof of its efficacy :—

"A merchant jeweller, great in the trade, received from Constantinople, on a certain occasion, ten finger-rings set with diamonds, and emeralds, and topazes. He looked them carefully over, and locked them in a cupboard, but the next day one of them was discovered to be missing. No stranger had penetrated into the house since the valuables were put away; and it therefore stood to reason that the thief must be found in one of the inmates of the dwelling. All the slaves and servants were examined, but no new facts were brought to light, and the jeweller ended by dragging an old and faithful servant before the Bey, in spite of his reiterated assertions of innocence. The poor man had no means of defending himself except by tears and protests, and the other had no proofs to support his accusation except the testimony of his daughter, a little girl of twelve years old, who swore to having seen the old man with her own eyes abstract the jewel from its casket.

Between allegations so opposed, the Bey found himself in a dilemma, and at length decided on having recourse to the bastinado.

"I order five hundred blows to be equally divided," he cried, "between the two parties, each of them receiving fifty at a time."

The execution of the sentence began with the miserable accused, who duly received his quantum, swearing and vowing all the time by Mahomet and the prophets. It was now the turn of the accuser; he was already seized by the executioners, and placed face downwards on the ground, when the little girl advanced to the steps of the throne, and drew from her mouth the very ring concerning which there had been so much discussion. The Bey could not wipe out the blows received by the servant, but gave him as indemnity the fatal ring, ordering, at the same time, that his adversary should be the recipient of the strokes still due, in the character of false accuser. It is needless to remark that a large sum paid over to the Bey bought off the vengeance of that sagacious individual.

All this savours rather of lynch-law; but the Tunisians prefer the court of the Bey to those of the Kadis and lawyers. It is a common proverb at Tunis:—"Better the tyranny of the Turk, than the justice of the Arab."

Murderers are generally punished by death, unless sufficiently wealthy to pay the "amende." Should the person to be executed be a Turk, he is strangled at the kasbah, or fort; but if he be a Moor, he is hanged on the spot where the deed was committed. In cases of strangulation, sundry Christians, or Greek tavern-keepers, are sent for, who are forced to undertake the office of executioner. Two of them hold a well-greased cord in its place round the victim's neck, whilst other two pull with feet and hands until death ensues!

Women are usually condemned to the "noyade," as being a more fitting end for them than the ruder methods I have cited.

A woman condemned to be drowned is first paraded through the town on a donkey, and then conducted to the borders of the lake. She is there tied up in a sack, with some heavy stones,

and cast into the water; but as the water is not more than two feet deep, the sack is kept down with sticks, until the poor creature is thoroughly suffocated.

The favourite punishment of the Bey for robbers is the cutting off of their right hands (only when they are unable to pay up, *bien entendu)*; and the execution of the sentence is carried out as usual by one of the Christian residents. Whether he has ever done the deed before is of little consequence—he severs the wrist at the articulation, somehow or other, with a blunt or sharp knife, according as fate directs. Formerly the stump used to be plunged in boiling pitch, but now, say the Tunisians, they are *more refined*, and make a ligature sometimes of the greater arteries. The hand is tied round the neck of the robber, who is then promenaded about on a donkey, amid general demonstrations of approval. A refined and highly civilized people, truly!

Tunis possesses four places of refuge—mosques, which have the right of asylum. The privilege arose originally in honour of some sainted founder,

and the prerogative extends to a certain space of ground encircling the holy buildings, so that Jews, and even Christians, may avail themselves of the boon. They do so very often—more especially in cases of debt. These places are held in such high esteem, that even the Bey himself would hardly dare to drag anyone from beneath their shadow. The reigning sovereign has only desecrated the holy places once since he ascended the throne, and that was in the case of a man who had pitilessly murdered two little babies, out of spite to their father. The privilege of sanctuary yielded on that occasion before general indignation and the enormity of the crime. But, of course, in this wonderfully organized administration there are crooked ways of attaining a desired end. If His Majesty really cares to get at the criminal, he sends masons to the mosque, with orders to wall up the doors and windows within which the wretch has taken refuge, leaving only a tiny aperture for the passage of his voice. Guards are stationed on the spot, with orders to intercept any food which his relations may endeavour to pass to him, and the

miserable victim soon begs to be taken before the Bey, driven to despair by hunger and thirst.

The Bey possesses but one minister, the "Keeper of the Seal," whose business it is to stamp all documents emanating from that prince. He has little real power, and should be considered more in the light of a privy-counsellor, attached to the interests of his sovereign, than the real chief of a vast administration. Besides this personage, there are many courtiers, great men and rich, who are sent out as ambassadors from time to time, to fulfil ceremonious formalities, and see after commercial negotiations. The returned ambassador must be a perfect marvel of discretion, if he hopes to continue in his master's favour. If he dare to breathe a syllable about the beauty or magnificence of the country he has visited, or to speak of the perfection of its government, his fate is sealed. Should he tell stories of its size or wealth, or power of cultivation, he is certain to be reported by fellow-courtiers as a bad Mussulman, and the greased rope will be the reward of his indiscretion. If he manages, on the other hand, to keep his tongue

between his teeth, he will reap the harvest of his merits in a smile from the Royal lips, and a nod now and then from the anointed head. The Bey is decidedly economical in his liberality. Fond of money himself, he rarely bestows pecuniary gifts on others. Recompense for service done generally takes the shape of an empty title, or privilege accorded, such as a right of embarking or disembarking a given amount of merchandise, with a specified exemption from duty. He has a really wonderfully-constructed memory as regards the payment of his debts. Members of his household often go without their salaries for a considerable period of time, and eventually perhaps only receive at most a handful or two of gold sequins.

One day, being in a good humour, and pleased with his buffoon, he presented him with a purse of money; but the latter begged humbly that his master would pay him no more for the future.

"Will your Highness," he added, "replace any pecuniary gratification by a slight favour, which will have no effect on the treasury—will you condescend to call your servant, when you are seated

in the audience-chamber, and whisper from time to time in my ear, accompanying the words with a few unmeaning smiles?"

The Bey was delighted at this new method of remuneration; and the buffoon took great care, when addressed graciously in public by his lord, to reply with a confidential air and many nods. The prince's condescension for his buffoon was soon remarked by the surrounding courtiers, who jumped immediately to the conclusion that he had given himself up to this new favourite, and from that moment it was to him that all solicitations were addressed, accompanied, as is the custom, by rich gifts and gorgeous presents. The Bey inquired one day of his fool whether his purse was not by this time empty; to which the latter replied—

"Oh! my prince, it has never been so full as since you have ceased putting anything into it!"

Government, then, is absolute, freed from even the appearance of institutions usually considered inherent to proper organization. This arose originally from the Bey having been a military chief named by the Porte, governing by the sword alone,

disdaining to make use of regular civil forms in treating with a vanquished and despised people.

The Bey is master of the lives, the fortunes, and the honour of his subjects. The first minister is as much subject to his caprices as the poorest Jew. He can take back with one hand that which he has just given with the other; and even disgraced officers of State have been seen begging in the streets of the capital.

This exaggeration of power in a single hand is so contrary to all the recognised ideas of the century, places so powerful a barrier against the development of a country's dignity and happiness, that His Majesty renounced in 1861 the boundless authority exercised by his ancestors. This he did under pressure, it is true, from the European consuls.

The people, however, insisted on the abandonment of the new constitution, seeing in it too close an approximation to European institutions, and finding their demand ungranted, rose in a series of revolts. The Bey argued with the rebel leaders, pointing out wisely enough that civil war was the

surest way to bring about the consummation they so much dreaded; that Tunis, fallen into the hands of rioters, would be delivered by some Christian power, who, intervening under pretext of preserving public peace, would surely be loth afterwards to give up the prey, preferring rather to govern it as a colony, as France governed Algeria. He told them that there existed at their very doors a powerful party anxious to annex the Regency to Algeria, in order that France might ultimately possess in Africa the whole of the ancient Roman colony; that Victor Emmanuel, on the other hand, firm on his new throne, was looking with envy at the plains over against his kingdom, desiring anxiously to possess colonies like England and France, and that he would be certain not to let slip an opportunity of obtaining for himself an Italian Algeria.

Notwithstanding all his rhetoric the rioting continued, and the Regency has now sunk deeper into the mud than ever.

CHAPTER X.

THE STREETS AND BAZAARS.

AFTER a hasty breakfast we took a guide, a bowing, smiling little man, with a small body and a large beard, an enormous red tarbouche, and piercing black eyes glittering beneath, and sallied forth to get some notion of the town. Through wonderful streets we threaded our way, leading up into the heart of the city. Winding alleys and dark courts, narrow pavements, and narrower foot-paths, long straggling bazaars, with vaulted roofs, which open out one into the other in hopeless maze and intricacy, rendering a saunter alone a work of impossibility, unprovided with some silken string to the tangled labyrinth. We visited a tobacco manufactory—a queer scene enough—a square court giving access to various rooms, in which we found the weed in all stages of preparation. One

hall in particular struck us as being effective. A large domed place it was, painted pompeian-red, a little light admitted through tiny apertures high up. Rows of natives were seated along the walls, pounding away from morning till night with a mortar between their legs, at the making of snuff. The air was so thick with tiny particles that it was difficult to breathe, and it became a matter of small wonder that more than half the workers were stone-blind.

Tunis is, on the whole, ill-provided with ways of communication. The streets are narrow and ill-paved. The houses are usually low and square, with a large central hall, open to the sky; those that are two storeys in height are the exception, and as to three storeys, they are very rare indeed. Every dwelling is crowned with its terrace, a method of construction most necessary in this climate, as it is only by means of these flat surfaces that water is gathered into cisterns. Rain-water is a *sine quâ non* in a land of brackish rivulets.

The houses of the rich are generally comfortable,

and often magnificently decorated. All windows open on the inner court, so that the streets look sombre and uninhabited to a European eye.

Each trade has its own bazaar, or long narrow covered street; a great boon to the purchaser, who is thus enabled to play off one shopman against another, and obtain the article of which he is in search at the very lowest price, for of course they all tout for themselves, and, in their excitement, come down most astonishingly in their demands!

The most important of the bazaars is that of the tailors, which presents a wonderful sight in the way of novelty and gorgeousness of colour to the newly-arrived tourist. It is a long winding place, with a vaulted roof pierced by skylights at intervals, through which the sun penetrates but dimly. On either side the way are ranged a series of open shops, like large horse-stalls in a stable, divided one from the other by red and yellow pillars, and raised some two or three feet from the ground. On the elevations thus arranged the tailors sit, squatting cross-legged on many-tinted mats, working at their trade or smoking with their friends,

surrounded on all sides by brilliant garments, lovely in colour and magnificent with embroidery. At the back of each shop hangs some rich drapery or curtain, revealing mysteries behind, and treasures of gawdy and gilt cupboards, well-stocked with jacket and gondoura. The beauty of Tunisian embroidery is almost inconceivable, all in one colour usually, just a shade darker than the cloth on which it is applied. The way in which every man's garment is worked and covered with silk braid is a marvel to new-comers, whilst the graceful fulness of the folds, and exquisite harmony of tone, is a perpetual source of delight to the artist's eye. Whichever way we turned, we could not but be struck with surprise at the distinctly new life into which we had penetrated. Accustomed for so long to the eternal white woollen burnouses of Algiers and Kabylie, this superfluity and "wallowing" in colour was certainly most refreshing. They are gifted with a never-failing instinct of good taste, these Tunisian gentlemen; however violent the juxtaposition in their dress, the tints somehow never seem to clash; exactly the

right tone is chosen, and put by the side of something whose shade harmonizes with it to a nicety. I do not believe the colours have been yet invented that would not go together if properly adjusted as to tone. People talk with horror of blue and green, and at the same time the Tunisians are very fond of the amalgamation. They seem to have a *penchant*, however, for extreme delicacy of tint, wearing a rose-coloured robe with a jacket of lovely tea-green, or canary-yellow nether garments, with a pale-blue burnous. Respectable women retain the white linen veil and yashmak while walking in the streets, but at home are clad in tight-fitting trowsers, sometimes elaborately worked with gold and silver, a short satin shirt, parti-coloured usually, and an abundance of veils and draperies floating from their hair.

We wandered about among the stalls, bargaining over burnouses, and examining the beautiful woollen rugs for which Tunis is celebrated, unfolding brightly-striped shawls, and making ourselves generally obnoxious to the shopkeepers. I was anxious to obtain a red cap or tarbouche for

wearing on the journey, and was accordingly conducted to a dingy little shop, at the extreme end of which, on a species of raised dais, sat a regal personage clad in delicate grey and yellow, who bowed me to a seat with quiet superiority. He was the Bey's tailor, and consequently a great man by reflection. As I sat looking at him, my thoughts wandered away to the great Mr. Poole of Saville Row, and I thought that this mighty being gained considerably by the comparison. He and his shop would make a picture. A handsome man he was, of middle age, long in the nose, with magnificent flashing eyes. His fine head was loosely draped in the hood of a pale burnous, and the grey and yellow of his dress harmonized well with the cerise of his trowsers and dainty stockings, while delicate white hands covered with turquoise rings held lightly in the scales the silk tassel which I had chosen. So interested was I in contemplating the *ensemble*, with its Rembrandtesque effect of light, that I put my elbow through a looking-glass, which mishap he took with kingly composure, merely waving his patri-

cian fingers to intimate that it didn't matter, whilst I was covered with confusion.

Fatigued with wandering, and dazed with so much novelty, I took up my traps and went out sketching, depositing myself in one of the stalls of the Israelitish bazaar. I was speedily forced to desist, however, driven pretty nigh demented by the cries and shrieks around me, a scene altogether almost impossible of portrayal; crowds of the gaily-dressed pushing and swaying in all directions; a man on horseback, or a laden mule, knocking the passengers from side to side on their onward course; here a nigger with a tray shouting out his wares; there a beggar, feeble of limb, but strong of voice, claiming rather than beseeching alms with authoritative gesture; decent women in long white robes and black masks, or yashmaks; ladies of lighter morality pushing through the throng, with faces exposed, and the very shortest of chemises, all the rest of their clothing being seemingly twisted round their head; turmoil and noise, hubble-bubble and confusion, all struggling madly on, with no thought for any but them-

selves. In the midst of the hubbub came a distant tramp of horses, and "Il Bey! Il Bey!" became instantly the cry. Presently the Bey rode through the crowd on a showy horse, caparisoned in silver gilt and red velvet, an ugly, peevish-looking old man, hidden in a uniform plastered over with gold lace, and a great tarbouche drawn down almost over his eyes. Behind him followed his suite, composed of about twenty officers, all grandly mounted and got up, who made their horses caracole and kick, to the great delight and alarm of the assembled multitude. The whole cortége clattered among the throng, driving the salaaming people to the right and left; and I heard the echo of their feet die away, whilst the jabber of sellers and the bickering of buyers reached so fearful a pitch of discordance, that I was fain to pack up my traps and make off with all speed.

The magnificence displayed in the accoutrements of their horses is as remarkable as everything else about these queer people. Nearly every horse we saw (except, of course, those belonging to the poor) had bridles and bits set with solid pieces of

silver, and enriched with stones, whilst the saddles and saddle-cloths were of scarlet velvet, giving their whole aspect a "circusy" appearance. This display of wealth may perhaps be accounted for by the great preponderance of Jews among the inhabitants of the capital, which boasts of a population about 125,000 strong. It is impossible to give correct statistics, as there are no such things as registers, either of births, marriages, or deaths. In the same way there are no guide-books; we could not succeed in obtaining a map of the country in the entire town, and were indebted to the kindness of a stranger lady for the loan of one during our stay in the metropolis.

After dinner our little guide lit his lantern (a very necessary precaution, as no streets are lighted), and carried us off to do "Tunis by night!" We were first of all conducted to a native "Café chantant," which was a most striking scene—a large square hall, with lofty roof, all hung with quaint lamps and bird-cages; in the centre a large square stage, covered with matting, on which reposed a multitude of Arabs and Turks, cross-legged,

and pipe in mouth; on one side of it three musicians, with a twanging guitar, and a tamborine, crooning a melancholly chant, that rose and fell like the moaning of the wind. All round the walls the elders of the company, their feet tucked under them, sitting on a species of shelf, the rest of the space fully occupied by squatting figures in every shade of colour, the whole mass so closely packed that it was all but impossible to pass. When we first went in we could distinguish nothing in the dazzle, but by degrees red tarbouches and white turbans detached themselves from the mazy chaos, while shadowy forms flitted through the tobacco-smoke, distributing perfumed drinks, or carrying burning coals in little pincers to give a light to such as were in need of it. Here we sat, and sipped and smoked, and smoked and sipped, until the heavy atmosphere was no longer endurable, and we then adjourned to a mysterious vault-like place, the abode of the native Polichinelle. In all the Franco-African dominions these things have been suppressed, in consequence of their excessive impropriety; but here they flourish still, and the

principal audience consists of young children! At one end of the little low vault was a sort of sentry-box, with an aperture about two feet wide, covered with stretched muslin. The marionettes act on this disk as silhouettes by means of a light behind. The instant the performance began all was silence and attention; but we soon tired of it, being unable to make out the Arabic dialogue, and went off, still under the auspices of our guide, to witness a performance of native acrobats.

The whole thing made a perfect picture as it stood—perfect in every way, both in colour and in chiaroscuro. The scene took place in a vaulted room, supported in the middle by four pillars, whose feet fitted into the corners of a large stage. On this stage performed a set of wild-looking saltimbanques, in ragged finery, with unkempt hair and unwashed, swarthy faces. They went through a weird kind of pantomimic action, in which one of the number kept continually bobbing out from among the pillars, draped in a long garment, personating, I presume, the devil; while the rest exhibited their notions of fear, terror,

surprise, and anxiety, varied with a little primitive tumbling and standing on one another's heads. Round the edge of the stage, almost touching the performers, were assembled a motley group of spectators, half sitting and half lying, their laughing faces lit up by the four flickering oil-lamps that were affixed to the red and blue columns, serving only to make darkness visible; behind, a background of uncertain whitewashed wall, and moonlight glinting through a high-up window. The original building, the original audience, the original performance, as it went on hundreds of years ago! It is as well to have seen all this before it is swept away by modern innovation, as it will assuredly be before very many years are out.

It is only during the month of Ramadan that these festive excitements are permitted to go on; at all other times a curfew-bell is rung when the sun goes down, after which none are allowed in the streets. This law was made to check as much as possible the nightly assassinations, whose numbers were increasing in an alarming degree.

As it was still comparatively early, we resolved on dismissing our guide and going for a stroll under the purply-blue heavens. We told the landlord of the hotel that the heights of La Kasba, the fort that crowns the town, was our intended destination, and begged him to provide us with the necessary lanterns. He strongly dissuaded us from our project, the tortuous streets and blind alleys being, he said, exceedingly dangerous, owing to the lawlessness of the soldiery, who unfortunately are armed with rifles.

These soldiers are the curse of Tunis. There are not many of them, and those there are receive no pay—not even bread. Government provides them with olives and oil—such oil!—the refuse which cannot be made to turn an honest penny in any other way. They are therefore left to their own resources, and become nothing more or less than a set of bandits. Even the Bey is afraid of them, and winks at their malpractices. During the eight days previous to his annual progress into the interior, consternation and terror reign throughout the city. Christians and Jews, and

even many Moors, remain shut up at home, for fear of being insulted and maltreated by the drunken soldiery, who force money from the passers-by at the point of the poniard; and even rob them of their garments, leaving their victims naked in the public thoroughfares! The people of Tunis ought perhaps to be accustomed to this way of going on. At the moment in which I write there are two lunatic women hovering about the town, who possess themselves of everything that they choose out of the stock of the surrounding shops, protected by their madness from prosecution, on the principle of every maniac being a saint!

Having the truly British feeling of dislike as to giving up anything, we resolved to persevere in our projected evening stroll, and being properly armed with pistols and lanterns, proceeded to skirt the town between the old and new outward walls. A very picturesque scene it was, the wide streets and low white houses shining ghastly and deserted in the false green light, whilst perfect silence (for a wonder!) reigned around; except

when now and then some fragment of the wild minor music of the native guitar was borne on the wind, swept from some depth of gloomy archways. A brisk walk brought us through the solitude to the broken ground in front of the old Kasba. The towering ruins of this time-worn fortress frowned sadly upon us in impenetrable shadows; a sound of plashing fountains soothed the ear; while the sleeping town, with its flat terrace-roofs and blank white walls bathed in the streaming moonlight, was a very picture of peace and calm repose. The city lies so flat, and appears so low and windowless, that one can hardly believe it to be a nest of human habitations. A few cupolas sprinkled here and there, and the minaret of the great mosque, all lit with lamps, serve to break the monotony of the picture; while the long sea line and misty range of mountains seem more like indications in a dream than real stern reality.

On leaving our post of observation, we resolved on endeavouring to find our way through the labyrinth of streets below us, and, as I carried the light, it became my duty to assume the duties of a

pioneer. Pioneering is all very well, but on occasions such as this, becomes no easy task. The scene was so lonely and desolate, as to make us quite uncomfortable; the way winding and tortuous, now under a series of Moorish arches and high bleak walls, now turning down a seemingly impracticable blind alley, where we were forced to walk with extreme caution, on account of the utter darkness, and then emerging into bright moonlight, and following its intricate course, which ended ultimately in a dead wall. We held a council of war over our plan of operations, being disagreeably impressed with the very small chance we should have if set upon in a trap like this, with no means of escape or of assistance. All windows looked, of course, into the courtyards of the houses, so that no help could be expected from that quarter; and, in fact, the whole thing wore a look of intense desolation, which was most unpleasant. The only living things we met were sundry cats, which started away on our approach, and now and then a native or stalwart negro muffled to the eyes in the folds of his cloak, from out

the masses of which twinkled the light of a lantern that faded into distance like a glowworm's flame, and died away with the echoing footsteps of its owner.

CHAPTER XI.

CARTHAGE.

AS the following morning was brilliantly fine, we determined to devote the day to our classic recollections, and ponder over the vanity of human affairs, sitting like Marius on the ruins of Carthage.

> "Urbs antiqua fuit—Tyrii tenuere coloni—
> Carthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe
> Ostia, dives opum, studiisque asperrima belli."

Who could visit that famous spot without recalling that dear old hackneyed quotation?

We hired a close carriage (as open ones are not allowed to the ordinary tourist), and reaped the benefit of the arrangement by finding ourselves sheltered from the searching rays of the sun. Two hours' drive brought us to the scene of action —a dreary, desolate plain, divided into ill-ploughed

fields, which looked as though they could produce nothing but stones—spreading, undulating brown wastes, that seemed crushed under some fatal curse, some such terrible anathema as that of Cato the Implacable—"Delenda est Carthago!" Here and there a stunted olive or scraggy palm rose struggling through the sod, only to make the pervading barrenness all the more impressive.

The ruins of the ancient city rise in the midst of this melancholy amphitheatre, a crumbled wall or littered heap of stones the only remnant of long-vanished palaces. Strive as you may, sad thoughts and bitter memories will crowd into your mind as you stand among all these *débris* that so humbly shroud the earth—bits of mosaic and fragments of shattered columns, sole relics now of the departed splendour that once ruled the seas, and battled with success against Imperial Rome herself.

"Giace l'alta Cartago; appena i segni
De l'alte sue rovine il lido serba."
(Tasso—"Gerusalemme Liberata," canto xv.*)*

What remains now of all the art-treasures so carefully stored away, noble creations of human

industry? Nothing—but here and there some venerable stone half-buried in the earth, which the ignorant Arab spurns carelessly under foot, as though he were not desecrating the hallowed dust of the great departed who carried his fathers into slavery.

"Quâ devictæ Carthaginis arces
Procubuere, jacentque, infausto in littore, turres
Eversæ. Quantum illa metus, quantum illa laborum
Urbs dedit insultans Latio et laurentibus arvis;
Nunc passim vix reliquias, vix nomina servans,
Obruitur, propriis non agnoscenda ruinis."

(*Lucanus*—"*De Bello Civili*," *lib.* ii.)

I sat and sketched the remains of Dido's palace; not much to sketch, in truth—a fragment of bricks and mortar overgrown with flowers, the turquoise sea behind, and violet hills stretching across the bay; while the doctor became highly sentimental and oppressive, soaring into flights of rhetoric about "classic ground," which invariably terminated in dreadful bathos and misquotation.

The remains cover a superficies of forty-five Roman miles; that, at least, is according to the dimensions given by Strabo of the entire town. Whatever the precise dimensions may have been,

the ruins at present in existence are amply sufficient to determine the exact spot where everything once stood that is made sacred by classic memories, and to show that the old metropolis was situated six miles north of Tunis, opposite that Rome with whom she fought so long, and under whose hand she was destined finally to succumb.

The place has not as yet been well excavated; very few attempts indeed have been made to do so. The Bey cannot undertake the work himself, from lack of funds, and peremptorily refused permission to anyone else, although he was encouraged in the futile efforts which he did make by the discovery of many statues and valuable inscriptions. We visited the tanks that once supplied the town, vast underground reservoirs, in which there still is water, and penetrated, by aid of lanterns, as far as has yet been exposed—not very far, after all—and then drove to the top of the hill which overlooks the bay, and which is crowned by a temple sacred to St. Louis. It was on the 1st of July, 1270, that Louis IX. embarked, with sixty thousand men, on his second expedition against the

infidels. The 17th of the same month brought him to Tunis, where he landed without resistance. Eight days after he took the Kasbah; but the plague had penetrated into his camp, and he fell a victim to it himself on the 25th of August following, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his reign. The hideously ugly gingerbread chapel, which now stands on the spot where he is supposed to have died, was erected by Louis Philippe in 1841, in remembrance of his celebrated ancestor, and it remains a dreadful monument to the execrable bad taste of its builder.

I say "supposed to have died," because it is a now recognized fact that he died at Soussah. Of course it is more poetical to place the scene of this chivalrous personage's passing out of life in front of Dido's pyre, by the tombs of Hanno and Hamilcar, and near the cradle of great Hannibal, than in a dirty hole peopled by Bedouins; and as fiction very often takes the place of bald truth, we must forget what we know of the facts, and remember that St. Louis died at Carthage. As a pious *souvenir* of a favourite saint, the present Catholic

church was raised in honour of the Christian hero; and, when one looks at it, it becomes difficult to decide whether or no so frightful a monument was not rather a *dishonour* than otherwise. It is of octagonal form, and stuccoed over, to try and give it the appearance of marble. It is too small and *mesquin* to make any effect, and is altogether a miserable failure. The pavement is rising in the middle, the ceilings are wrinkled with crevices, and the walls are covered with pictures that are ridiculous in their mediocrity. The altar is overloaded with tawdry finery, from amongst which rises a tottering effigy of the king, who seems to be wasted by fever, and overcome by the melancholy of his house. Though the building is ugly in itself, the palm and geranium gardens that mask it are exceedingly beautiful, and form, with the surrounding scenery, an almost perfect spot. We sat a long time on the chapel steps, ruminating over a cigar, and enjoying our laziness. Before us, over a foreground of terraces, and geraniums, and sweet-smelling plants, stretched a line of deep-blue water, with the jagged mountains of Gayro-

nan rising peaked and pinnacled beyond, a snow-white lateen sail or two skimmed like a bird over the azure expanse, while to our left lay, cold and sad, the dark bleak plain that once was Carthage.

Twice in the world's history has Carthage been great and powerful. Destroyed in Pagan times by Rome, her implacable enemy, she rose like a phœnix from her ashes, to become, in the first epoch of the Christian era, a town of wealth and elegance, a Rome of art and the *belles lettres*, fit capital of civilized Africa. Her lovely situation has always captivated her conquerors. Taken by the Vandals from the Romans, and from the Vandals by the Byzantine Greeks, she was conquered in 696 by the Arab Hassan, who respected her magnificence, and departed, leaving behind him a small garrison. The garrison was expelled by the inhabitants, and Hassan, on his return, gave way to his instincts of destruction, and renewed the scenes of horror which had been formerly carried out by the soldiers of Scipio. Carthage disappeared from the world for the second time. The fatality which seemed attached to the unhappy

town, and which had thrown her, in spite of her brave men and her fortifications, by turns under the heel of so many nations—Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, and Arabs—appears to have struck the superstitious spirit of Hassan, who accordingly transported his capital to a place more difficult of access, behind a shallow lake impracticable for vessels of war. Such is, if not the origin of Tunis, at any rate the first cause of its prosperity.

Among the population of Tunis must be sought the descendants of those Carthaginians who were spared by the iron of the conqueror. Even the stones of the old town served to build the new one; and, besides this, the beys made a traffic in the fruitful ruins. It became quite the fashion for the Italians and Spaniards of the Middle Ages to adorn their palaces with Carthaginian marbles; and the stranger admires to-day in the Doria terrace at Genoa, and along the Grand Canal at Venice, friezes and columns which were once the admiration of Dido and Æneas. The Pisans are proud of having spoiled Carthage for the decoration of their own fine cathedral; whilst the Moors

of Seville and of Cordova lined their mosques with similar relics and remnants of antiquity.

It is not wonderful that after all this destruction, inspired first by fear and fanaticism, and afterwards by greed and cupidity, there should remain little of the capital but one or two shattered walls. And yet these walls have served their purpose in establishing, without a doubt, the exact topography of the city. Niebuhr was the first in our times to designate the old monuments and remains, which, like those of Tyre and Nineveh, had been lost up to the commencement of the century. He discovered not only the outer walls and suburbs, but even went so far as to give a name to the temples and forums.

The destiny of the town has always been glorious, yet sad. After being destroyed with so much fury, by order of the Senate, that all was ground to powder which the flames had spared, it was condemned to remain uninhabited for ever, as a lasting monument of Roman vengeance. But man's decisions are no more lasting than his works. To the hatred of old Cato succeeded under Augus-

tus a sort of sentimental interest, inspired by the fictions of Virgil. The charming story of the reception of Æneas by Dido, and her passion for the Trojan hero, drew tears from the hardest people in the world—the people who could look with stony eye on the gladiator's death struggle and the victimed slaves of the arena; and it was quite "the thing" to be interested in the Carthaginians who had fallen a prey to Roman Republicanism. Carthage was now rising into being for the second time. Her admirable situation drew within her walls all the Italian merchants who were propelled by a spirit of adventure towards the African coasts; her population increased as if by magic, and everyone was filled with a like sentiment of sympathy and good-will for the heroes who had lived on that glorious spot. It became a mania. Everybody went about with the old authors in their hands, to try and discover the ancient topography, in order that new Carthage might be exactly the same as the old one. The famous Byrsa, with its Temple of Æsculapius, was reconstructed in the original locality, and in its

former proportions; and the Temples of Neptune, of Juno, and Astarte grew again into their pristine shapes. With the removal of the capital to Tunis, however, the dream faded away, and there remains now nothing but the dreary plain, the arid sand, the gloomy olives, and the eternal sea splashing for ever on its rocks.

We rose to go before sunset, as there was much yet for us to do before the dawning of another day. Returned to the town, we paid our respects to the British Consul, who was very civil, and gave us much information as to our further route. He said that a land-journey back into Algeria was absolutely impracticable, except with an armed escort, and offered to apply for us to the Bey for soldiers, if we insisted on carrying out our plan. We declined with thanks, however, knowing the reputation of the soldiers, and being fully aware that under their charge we should be off Scylla on to Charybdis! The Consul lives in a magnificent palazzo, which looks on to the principal square. We were ushered into his presence through a fine hall, and up a staircase lined

throughout, walls and all, with Moorish tiles, which had a rich and striking novel effect. Could not the same principle be applied with us? As we followed the gorgeously-embroidered servant across the reception-rooms, we all felt very small and humble, accustomed as we now were to beggars' hovels and dirty inns, and fully realized the unpleasant feelings of some poor poacher dragged before a magistrate. I never felt so shy in all my life, and sat on the edge of my chair, and longed for a collar and a hair-brush, as a starving wretch would long for food!

The real event of the day, and, in fact, of our stay at Tunis, was to take place after dinner—an Israelitish dance, which had been got up entirely and solely for our private benefit.

Accordingly, the garrulous little imp of a Turk, who had acted as guide during our sojourn in the place, came to fetch us with a great parade of lanterns, and leading the way through sundry dark and cut-throat streets, finally landed us at the entrance of his own abode. A thick, nail-studded door opened for us, emitting a whiff of truly

Tunisian odours, and let us into a courtyard, small and close, and ill-ventilated. The little guide was in high feather, and jabbered incessantly—a funny little object, with wagging beard and enormous red tarbouche. In the courtyard we were received by his wife, a strange figure in scanty parti-coloured satin shirt and tight crimson trowsers. This style of dress is eminently picturesque when one becomes accustomed to its oddity. The tight drawers show off the figure to perfection, whilst the loose upper garment of rich stuff, and head draped in folds of gauzy texture, which festoons gracefully down the back, have each a peculiar charm and *cachet* of their own.

The gorgeous female ushered us at once, but with much ceremony, into her dwelling, a tiny room about fifteen feet by seven, with carpets and hangings decorating the walls, and sofas ranged all round. We of course occupied the place of honour, whilst the rest of the seats and most of the floor were speedily choked up by a crowd of neighbours, who of course "dropped in" quite accidentally to enjoy the fun.

On the seat which ran across one end of the room sat two lady dancers and three musicians, Jews, with a sort of tom-tom, fiddle, and guitar; the men dressed in all the magnificently embroidered panoply of their city, and the women in the usual satin shirt, parti-coloured, yellow, and pale blue. In one corner was a fire in an iron pot, over which stood Madame Red-Legs, busily superintending the coffee; while in another an old Meg Merrilies, with dishevelled hair, was wildly tossing an unfortunate baby of ten months in time to the tuning up of the instruments. As soon as coffee was over, and anisette had been duly handed round, the performance commenced, and so fearfully discordant a concert it never was my ill-luck to hear. The women bawled at the top of their voices, seeing who could shout the loudest, and as they got up steam, banged the tom-tom, and wagged their heads to the accompaniment, as though they would shake them off.

The first song was a wild Arab chant (shrieked by the company) with interminable verses, and seemingly no end or beginning in particular.

When they tired of singing (and what a mercy for us when they did!) one of the ladies danced—a very odd dance—which consisted in flinging her arms about and whirling round, with an obligato of quaint steps, exceedingly barbaric. The musicians crooned in chorus to the dance at intervals; the woman, who was a Juno, handsome and fat, throwing herself into attitudes the while, and turning her eyes inside out with excitement, until at last, fairly exhausted, she sank panting on a sofa.

After this, more coffee—more anisette—more direful music—and then the second lady got up to "foot it" in the ring. There was little room enough for her exertions—indeed, she scarce had room to move at all, but that did not signify—it was quite enough to look at her as she stood—a vision of beauty, lithe and young, with a warm yellow light shining down upon her: a really lovely girl of about seventeen, exquisitely made, as we could easily see through her *very* scanty raiment, her great tender eyes shining out like those of an ox from under heavy eyelashes—eyes with the least taste in life of a cast in them, which, by

the way, Lord Byron considered as the acme of perfection in Oriental beauty. Over her head was a soft filmy something of white and blue, which swayed and fluttered behind her as she moved, veiling, but not concealing, the long plaits of hair that fell thick and glossy to her waist; while in her mouth she held the end of a red silk handkerchief, that streamed over her shoulder, and threw up the brilliant olive of her complexion.

As the hours sped past the fun became fast and furious, the dancing more excited and fantastic, the songs louder and more excruciating. It was proposed that I should do a sketch of the young lady, which I accordingly did, and which she tore out of my sketch-book. About eleven we left the festive scene and sauntered out into the peaceful moonlight, though I believe they kept up the merriment as long as the liquor lasted.

One of the many marvels of the Regency of Tunis appears in its having no recognized boundaries! Many attempts have been made since the

French became masters of Algeria to settle the question, but negotiations have always had to be broken off. Therefore, when the French collectors arrive in their accustomed course in the neighbourhood of the border, the tribes claim to be natives of Tunis, and *vice versa.*

Much corn, and oil, and olives are exported yearly from the Regency. About three thousand bales of wool leave the country annually, whilst the beasts from whence it is derived are drafted off to Malta. The sheep are of the same breed as those of Spain, though coarser and of less value than the latter, chiefly on account of bad pasturage.

Many of the streams are brackish, and women go frequently two hours' journey in dry seasons in search of a pitcherful of pure water. When there is a greater lack of rain than usual, the following curious method of procedure is adopted. The Bey sends out his orders, and every *femme galante* receives a given number of blows of the bastinado, for it is argued that drought is a judgment inflicted on the country for the peccadilloes of these women!

Coffee, sugar, silk, vermilion, and all kinds of spices, are imported in large quantities from Marseilles, while brandy and liqueurs are contraband articles, only to be admitted on payment of a heavy tax. There used to be considerable commerce between Tunis and the Morea, but since the Russian war of 1769 all trade in that direction has died out.

One of the very important branches of Tunisian industry is the manufacture of *tarbouches*, the red caps with blue tassels, which are worn everywhere in the Levant. 120,000 of these head ornaments are said to leave Tunis yearly.

There is another important production which should not be allowed to pass without mention. I allude to the world-famed *attar of roses*. It is manufactured in large quantities throughout the Regency, being esteemed superior to that of Constantinople. Connoisseurs recognize it in its purity by pouring a drop of the essence on the thumb-nail; if it clings like gum it is said to be of the finest quality. The price of it is so high that none but the very wealthiest are enabled to make use of

the perfume, for six or seven drops are valued at about as many shillings. A peculiar red rose is employed for distillation, which gives out, besides the well-known *attar*, a more precious substance still, which never leaves the country, and costs upwards of 100 piastres the wine-glass full! An essence of jessamine is also made, which sells at about the same price as the *attar*, for though the plant is by no means rare, each blossom gives out a very infinitesimal portion of essential oil.

Tunis contains more Jews than any other town in Barbary; there is no means of arriving at correct statistics on the subject, but it is supposed that they number upwards of 20,000. They have bought from the Bey an exclusive right over the manufacture of wax, which brings them an enormous income. They also distil a kind of *eau-de-vie*, nominally for their own use, though it is sold clandestinely in large quantities, both to Moors and Turks, at an exorbitant price. A few amongst them have assumed the costume of Europeans, though most of them cling to their Oriental attire, a blue turban and grey robe. They are restricted

to these two colours, to avoid any confusion between them and those of the Mussulman religion.

I failed utterly in my attempts to arrive at the average number of Moors resident in the metropolis. The name Moor is said by some to be derived from the Greek word *Mauros*, which means "dark of complexion;" but it seems more probable that it dates from the Phœnician period, anterior to that of the Greeks, when that people first explored the northern coasts of Africa. In the Phœnician tongue Mouerym means Western, or people far removed, which gives a very satisfactory appearance to the latter hypothesis.

The Tunisian Moor is by no means stupid, in spite of the religion which drags him down; and is much more quick and apt in learning than his brother of Algeria. He is ignorant, as a rule, and extremely superstitious, considering that Islamism placed him many rounds higher on the ladder than the Christian, whom he despises accordingly, from the bottom of his heart.

The universal hatred of all these North-African nations for the Christian is easily traced to the un-

just crusades of long ago, at the period when the followers of the new religion desecrated their faith by murder, fanaticism, and bloodshed. No wonder that the Infidel abhorred the mediæval knights, who caused rivers of innocent blood to flow, bearing at the same time the milk-white banner, on which was inscribed, "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men!" The Moors are quite accessible to a feeling of gratitude for Christian kindness, nevertheless. There was great joy in Tunis over the successes of the great Napoleon, in memory of his having once set at liberty a number of Moorish slaves at Malta. A beggar one day in the street was entreating alms in the Frank language, and making use of a formula, to say the least of it, extraordinary; "*Donar mi meschino la carità d'una carrouba, per l'amor della santissima Trinità e dello gran Buonaparte.*"

There are many renegades among the Moors, drawn from all nations under heaven. Many adventurers have fled from time to time from the European continent, and have found it absolutely necessary to assume the religion of their adopted

country. It is rare to see Jews embrace the faith of Mahomet; and even when they do so, for some wonderful reason, they are thought less highly of than Christian renegades, for the latter find easily a resting-place in Mussulman cemeteries, while the former are never allowed to obtain admittance on any pretext whatever.

Drunkenness is alarmingly prevalent throughout the Regency, as is also the habit of opium-smoking; but in the practice of these vices there is little difference to be found between the natives of Tunis and of Algeria.

The real great point of peculiarity which separates the Tunisian by a wide gulf from the Algerine, is the mercantile spirit inherent in the former. One might almost imagine that it was an inheritance bequeathed to their descendants by the grand old Carthaginians, who were themselves, by-the-bye, inheritors from their Phœnician ancestors, the merchants that were christened Canaanites, from the Hebrew word meaning "one given to commerce." But if we give the credit of their commercial tendency to their Punic descent, we

must admit that that tendency is fostered and kept together throughout the kingdom by the number of its Jewish inhabitants, who have settled there from time to time, drawn thither by its favourable position for commercial operations. Be this as it may, however—whether it be the Moors who have instilled the mercantile instinct into the Tunisian Jews, or whether it be the reverse, it is none the less true that in spite of its more than questionable form of Government, the whole of Tunis bears the aspect of an immense bazaar.

Their commercial instincts have no doubt tended to soften the primitive roughnesses of the Tunisian population, making them, so to speak, the advanced guard of North-African civilization—for there is no doubt that they are in reality more civilized than their Western neighbours, even though the latter have had more than thirty years of perpetual contact with the refined French; but, at the same time, it is also the mercantile spirit which must bear the blame of the avarice and rapacity for which the dwellers in the Regency are but too conspicuous.

The Mauresques, or Tunisian ladies of Moorish descent, are generally far too fat to please a European eye. *Embonpoint* is the object of their ambition, and they take all sorts of astonishing means to compass the desired end, sometimes even assuming a waddling walk to make up for a deficiency in the corporeal element. They are generally adorned with an impossible number of pearls and precious stones, and numerous plaques of gold and silver, adding to the lustre of their eyes by a plentiful application of *kohol*, or powdered antimony, and darkening their nails and the palms of their hands by means of unsightly *henna*. A childless Mauresque is a miserable woman, for she runs a daily risk of being repudiated by her husband. It is said, indeed, that the extreme submission of the women of Tunis to their husbands, arises from dread of repudiation, for, when cast aside, they are blasted and ruined for ever. A woman can obtain a divorce from her husband by a demonstration of sufficient proof of guilt, but a man can put away his wife at his own will and pleasure.

I have elsewhere described the dress of the Tunisian ladies, which in the case of Jewesses varies a little from the description. They wear the same tight trousers as the other women, but a little shorter in the leg, to allow of open work stockings and jewelled slippers. Their throats are encircled in gauze veils, which drape about at will, leaving exposed that which they are supposed to hide. A very tightly-fitting and very open short black jacket covers their bodies, whilst a thin white burnous is wrapped round their heads, and falls over their shoulders to the waist. As far as costume goes, they might nearly as well have none, and yet I believe it is the veritable Jewish costume, and was worn, although it is contrary to tradition, by the holy women who followed our Lord to Calvary.

The Jewish population marry very young, and have a prodigious number of children. Their families, indeed, seem larger than they are, by contrast with the ever-decreasing Mussulmans. They already form a full quarter of the whole indigenous population, and seem pushing their Car-

thaginian neighbours into the sea. I spoke with a gentleman at Tunis who was convinced that it was on this spot that Jewish regeneration was to commence, prophesying that in a hundred years Tunis will have become a completely Jewish kingdom, ruled by an Israelitish monarch! How far this is probable I leave it to my readers to decide.

The best way to obtain an idea of Europe in the fifteenth century would be to travel through the Regency of Tunis. In 1523, Gustavas Vasa, wishing to divide among his creatures the goods confiscated from the Church, proved to them, satisfactorily at least to himself, that the ground was the property of the sovereign; that proprietors held nothing but a right of usufruct over their domains; and that he could dispossess them of their land if it were not properly looked after. The situation of the Tunis of to-day is the same as that of Sweden in the sixteenth century. The Bey gives land—with the power of taking it back again; but his exchequer is now verging on such a state of hopeless bankruptcy, that he will have to sell estates according to recognised usage, in

order to be master of any funds at all. Then the ground will become divided into private properties, the only way of making it disgorge its hidden treasures. Limited to the Bey, it is ill-cultivated, or not cultivated at all, and will only become the object of active enterprise when the agriculturist shall have such chances for the future as will effectually counterbalance the uncertainties of the present. Nothing could be worse than the system of farming carried out under the management of to-day. Every year, at the end of October, the agents of the Bey go the rounds of the country, selling by auction the territory of the tribes. If no one comes forward, the fields remain unploughed; and if they are let, they are cultivated but roughly, for the farmer, certain only of one year's possession, is naturally stingy of the manure which even African soil exacts. The ploughs and other implements in use are mostly made of wood, and are quite incapable of penetrating the iron-bound earth. Corn and oats are sown in large quantities on the vast interior plains of the Regency, but nothing could be more primi-

tive than their manner of cultivation. The ground, which is as hard as stone, can only be upturned after the November rains. Eight days after this operation the seed is laid in the furrows, the harvest is reaped in June, and seldom produces three times the amount of grain which was originally used for seed!

Tunis is rich in every kind of fruit—peaches, and grapes, plums and apricots; but more especially in oranges and dates, which are most excellent. In the salubrious climate of the plains, the men grow tall and vigorous; whilst animals participate in the advantages with which Heaven has endowed their lords. Unlike those of Algeria, oxen are large and fat; sheep are heavy, and decorated with enormous tails; and camels are wilder and more robust than in the sister country. It is the same with fishes and with vegetables. The Romans, indeed, preferred this kingdom of Carthage to all their other African colonies, and left there as a sign of partiality the most numerous traces of their dominion.

We left Tunis by the same boat that had brought

us thither, and sorry we were to see its white walls and glittering domes fading gradually into distance. We were compelled, however, to tear ourselves away, being anxious to penetrate into the Algerian Sahara before the breaking of the weather.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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